# PARTRIDGE REARING

by P. H. Whitaker

The
SHOOTING TIMES
and Country Magazine

SEVENTY-FOURTH YEAR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19th, 1956 1s. 3d. WEEKLY

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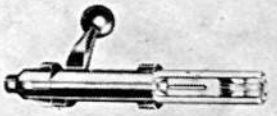
| **Action** | Hardened alloy steel action plus heavy, over-size locking lugs with maximum bearing area insure constant head space over an infinite number of rounds. Bolt is similar to that on Remington Models 721, 722 with "world's strongest bolt action." Close-fitting bolt operates smoothly inside large, sturdy, high-sidewall receiver. Double extractors. |  |
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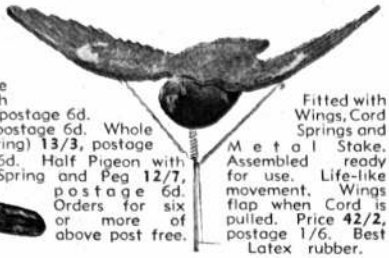

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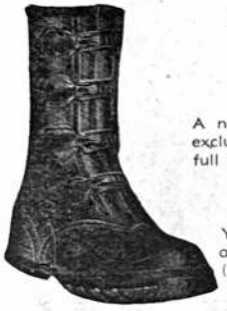

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# CLEAN KILLS

THE sixth article of an international charter of animal welfare, recently drawn up by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reads as follows: "That the claims and interests of science, sport, and entertainment can never exempt men from the obligation to avoid cruelty and suffering, whether in experimentation, hunting, training, or exploration." Most shooting men realise this and take the necessary steps, but pricked birds sometimes present a problem.

On the properly conducted inland shoot winged birds and runners are gathered and despatched with the minimum of delay, for there is generally on hand an efficient team of pickers-up and dogs for this purpose. The occasion or temptation for long shots does not arise so frequently as on the rough shoot or the shore.

Great concern about the seriousness of what the Americans refer to as "crippling losses" is being shown by the Atlantic Waterfowl Council. Fluoroscopes and X-rays reflect shot pellets being carried by duck in various parts of their anatomy and figures obtained from recent studies by a number of State fish and game departments show "that annual crippling losses range from 8 to 53 per cent, and average 25 per cent on a national basis for birds that are downed in sight of the hunter, but go unretrieved."

But this concern is tempered with reason. There is no suggestion of restrictions or of curtailing the wildfowler's sport. It is realised that the solution to the problem rests with the shooters themselves, and it is stressed that co-operation in an effort to reduce crippling losses can result in an immediate increase in wildfowl populations.

Over here the problem is by no means so acute, but it does exist, despite all the good work and instruction achieved by wildfowling clubs and associations. At the start of a new wildfowling season proper we make no apology for repeating the chief reasons for "pricked" losses and their remedies.

1. Trigger-happy shooting, the temptation to shoot at any bird that passes even though there is no good chance of a clean kill.

2. The inability to judge distances. Fowlers with this failing attempt to bring down every duck that flies over. In many cases, birds are hit, but seldom fall. This type of shooting frightens away all duck that might normally use an area and spoils the shooting for all.

3. Poor shooting—the sort of shooting demonstrated by the man who does not bother to practice during the close season.

4. The inability of some shooters to recognise the limitations of their guns and cartridges. Although modern cartridges have excellent performances too many shooters try to kill wildfowl past the point at which they can properly swing with the bird and shoot.

5. Many downed birds are lost because fowlers do not use a capable dog, or because the birds are dropped in places from which there is no chance of recovery.

The answers are so simple that there is no excuse for neglecting them.

1. Learn to use your gun and cartridges; know their capabilities and their limitations—and your own.

2. Shoot only at birds that are within reasonably close range.

3. Use a dog whenever possible.

4. Be a sportsman in the true sense of the word.


# THE SHOOTING TIMES AND COUNTRY MAGAZINE

Official Organ of
THE WILDFOWLERS' ASSOCIATION
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

No. 3867 FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1956 Founded 1882

*The wild life of today is not ours to dispose of as we please. We have it in trust. We must account for it to those who come after.—King George VI.*

# NOTES AND COMMENTS

### On the Bounty

A most amusingly illustrated and informative booklet, isued by the Michigan Department of Conservation has appeared on my desk, dealing with the status of the red fox in that State.

Of particular interest I found the notes on bounty schemes. It points out that the logic of the bounty system is simple, but unfortunately the operation is not. The reasoning is something like this. Foxes eat pheasants. A bounty will cause more people to kill more foxes. More foxes killed means fewer pheasants eaten by foxes and more pheasants for the shooting man.

These apparently simple elements of bounty reasoning become rife with complication when the bounty is put into practice. The biggest complication is the surplus of animals that all healthy animal populations produce. Pheasants produce a surplus each year and foxes do the same. The pheasant surplus is nature's way of keeping weather, foxes, hawks, owls, stoats, weasels, cats, dogs, shooting men, and other things from wiping out the pheasants. The fox surplus prevents dogs, accidents, parasites, diseases, hunting men, shooters, trappers, and the bounty system from wiping out the foxes. This surplus is the crop, the annual harvestable extras, the part not needed for next year's seed. The surplus is that part that will die of one cause or another in any case largely because the habitat cannot provide a living for all.

And so, regardless of the bounty's long history and continued use in many places, biological studies show that this system of predator control does not work.

The obvious exception in this country at the moment seems to be the grey squirrel which has suffered a drastic reduction since its tail became worth 2s.

### Clay Pigeon Programme

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association held in London on October 5 the following dates were decided upon for the Association's Championship Meetings in 1957:

April 26 and 27. British Open Sporting Championship and English Open Double-Rise Championship, Northolt, Middlesex.

May 31 and June 1. English Open Down-the-Line Championship Meeting, Northolt, Middlesex.

July 20. British Open Skeet Championship, Bedford.

It was announced that the 23rd Annual International Tournament would be held under the auspices of the Scottish C.P.A. at Stirling on Friday and Saturday, June 21 and 22.

The Annual Prize Meeting at Bisley will be held from Monday, July 8, to Saturday, July 20; and special events for Public School boys will be held at Bisley on July 22-24.

### A.C.A. News

Speaking at the annual prize-giving of the Crewe L.M.R. Sports Club the other day, Mr. R. Erskine-Hill, Secretary of the Anglers' Co-operative Association, told members that one of the primary aims of the A.C.A. today was to tackle more polluted water in the Midlands and in the North. The Association however was not yet as powerful as it should be to put ambitious plans of this sort into practice. At least 20,000 individual members were needed and the Association had only 6,000.

Ten shillings a year was not much to ask of anglers for a cause such as this. The long journeys in search of reasonable fishing which anglers in the North and Midlands now had to make at week-ends, might become a thing of the past if the Association was given proper support.

### A Hen Year?

Is this going to be a hen year, where pheasants are concerned? Many of my friends who shoot cocks only at the beginning, as well as at the end of the season, are surprised—and frustrated—by the much greater percentage of hen birds that they have seen, and are thinking of altering their plans accordingly.

On my own ground, although pheasants have done very well, cocks are conspicuous by their absence. Allowing for the notorious cunning of the cock bird and his ability to remove himself smartly from the danger zone, I wonder if there is anything in these observations.

It would be interesting to hear reports from other areas and to know if the preponderance of hens this season is general, or only local.

### Collective Effort

We were discussing collective nouns and playing the old game of trying to invent new ones. At the mention of a "sute of mallard" my "Young Shot" colleague offered "Why not a hirsute of hares?"

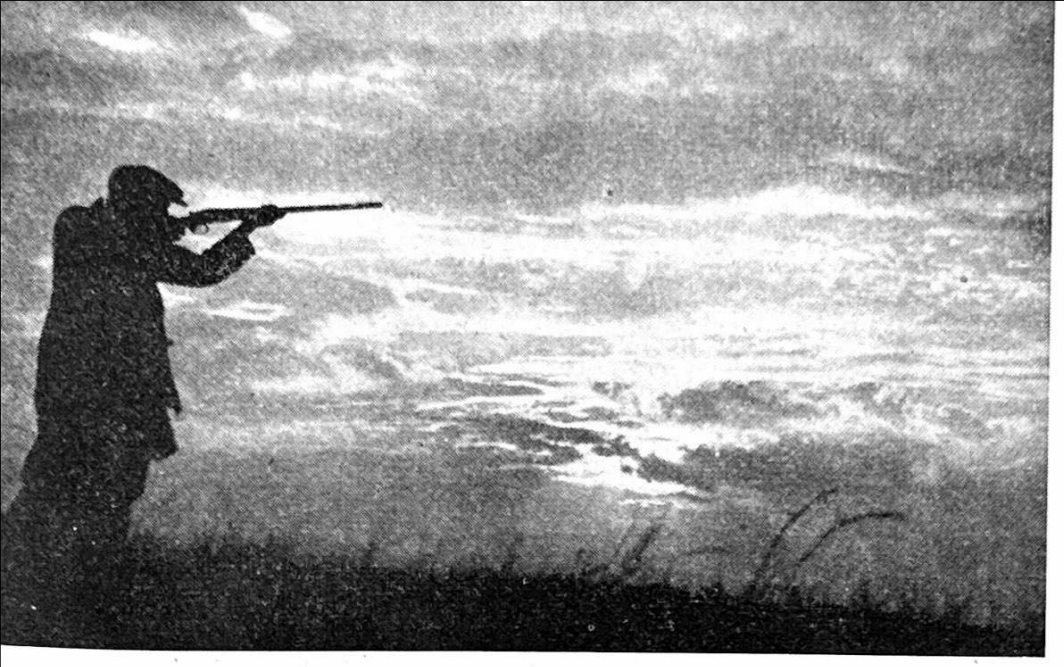
In the same vein, can anyone suggest suitable alternatives to this punishing overflow of "Petrel?"

### Great Jumping Frogs!

"If you enjoy shooting with bow and arrow, you'll find bullfrog hunting a challenging test of your marksmanship at close ranges. Better use birch arrows, though; cedar shafts break too easily on rocks and logs. Blunt heads are best for this kind of shooting."

*Field and Stream.*

AUCEPS.



*About to take a shot at mallard during evening flight. The sunset is fading and the first duck are on wing, circling round before flying off to feed.*

# Duck in the Sunset

*by Tower-Bird*

THE torn and kaleidoscopic sunsets of late autumn and winter, especially as seen over estuaries and seascapes, often defy description. We associate them with wavering lines and wedges of geese and duck; with fast-travelling flocks of wigeon and ragged mobs of curlew; with knifing winds and biting frosts. They belong to true fowling weather when the fair-weather gunners are conspicuous by their absence and the great majority of bird-watchers have "had it" until the spring.

But just now, and during the past few weeks, the sunsets we have enjoyed have been almost warming—physically and mentally; though now a feeling of frost in the air creeps on the fowler as he waits for the evening flight. There remain fresh in my mind certain sunsets enjoyed during the past September, and the early days of the present month.

I think the first one really to impress me was when three of us (two being ould Essex boys) sat facing a southern estuary with a sunset beginning to stain the western sky to our right. We had been sitting in our positions among the spartina grass for some three hours without having fired a shot between us—not even a curlew or a pigeon had come our way though we happened to be on the usual flight line of both. The sun sank lower and the evening was as mild and warm as any spring day. Following the afterglow which suffused the estuary in brightness, the last of the gulls from inland passed overhead, some of them jinking as they spied one of us below. The mournful weeping of plover and the occasional distant call of redshank; the bubbling of a feeding curlew and the sharp, harsh voice of a mud-wading heron came from the open muds through which a trickle of making tide was now starting to flow. But not a duck, not even a snipe showed itself.

**Two Silhouettes**

The brilliance of the multi-coloured sky to the west seemed to have become permanent, until deep dusk finally drew a curtain across it. But before that the word "duck" had passed from watching man to watching man, and we saw flying lonely and swiftly from south to north, and two to three gunshots or more away a clear-cut silhouette against the rich reds, orange, yellow, and greens of the backcloth. "Looks like a wigeon," said a voice. "It's a young mallard," said another. "The first pintail I've seen this season," said the third. The two dogs held their own council and said nothing, for man's best friend can be a wise beast. We expected the wigeon-mallard-pintail to turn at the end of the estuary and come streaking back, but saw no more of it. Then, a quarter of an hour or so later a single teal came from and took the same direction as the wigeon-mallard-pintail, and, like it, did not return.

**At the Tide's End**

As the three of us rocked and rolled back towards the village along the narrow, slippery, well-holed mud-path among the rushes, none spoke, but I know full well that, though we should have liked to have had a shot or two and a bird each for the larder, none had a complaint. Each had thoroughly enjoyed the long wait, the anticipation, the appreciation of all that an estuary in good weather means to the fowler, and I know, too, that the sight of those two duck in bold silhouette against the glowing embers of the September sunset had "made the day."

It was on the next-but-one evening that I found myself flighting alone as far inland as the tide runs. And for this particular spot I have seldom known the duck at this time of year to flight (for twenty minues or so) better. I sat among the tall, tasselled reeds facing a splash of flood-water some hundred yards broad. In this, the full glory of a flaming sunset was reflected so that it seemed that the whole world in front of me was on fire. As the colours softened and started to fade, the duck began to flight, a few at a time. Snipe rasped overhead, and a green-sandpiper called its soft, abrupt notes above me in the greyness. First came two mallard flying round twice before setting their wings and coming straight down on the water at the very edge of the flood, but on the far side of it. Then came five; then two more; then a three—all landing tantalisingly well out of shot. For once, I had not bothered to bring my decoys which I generally use at this spot and usually to good effect.

I was hesitating whether to clap my hands and hope that the rising duck would make towards me, when I saw two more mallard flying across the sunset and turning towards me (never have I seen so many *pairs* as I have this season, and most I have shot have been young birds, but not always a duck and drake). These birds came right over at full range, and I do not think they intended to land, and may not have seen the duck on the water at the edge of the pool. Over they came and I fired a single shot, bringing down one. Ten minutes later almost the identical thing happened.

**Self-Examine Acton**

Later, I held an inquest with myself as to why I did not manage to get in four shots and maybe bag two couple of duck. I came to the conclusion that, having watched the duck fly round and then suddenly turn straight over me, and at almost extreme height, and having, from a sitting position, concentrated on getting on to one bird and seeing it hit and falling, was cause enough for my being too slow to get on to a second bird. Shooting at a high, directly-overhead duck is far harder than standing and shooting at one not directly overhead, and a second of time makes all the difference under the circumstances, particularly in a strange light that must affect sight and judgment as the bird passes from the colours of a fading sunset into the grey-green mistiness of the sky-ceiling overhead. Or am I getting slow with advancing age? I do not think so, as only yesterday I put two barrels into a crow which sounded like one shot!

On the evening sandwiched between those about which I have written, there was no colourful sunset. I had gone down to some marshes quite early in the afternoon, well content to spend four or five hours watching and waiting to see if anything was on the move.

It was approaching dusk when I saw two mallard flying round, and, as I was watching them, a wisp of between twenty-five and thirty snipe whizzed overhead and departed. As I kept my eye on the duck, the snipe returned, but I gave them no more than a glance. Yet I noted their progress over very damp ground, and presently they came racing back, but turned when wide of me. It was then that I saw their long necks, and it was then that my brain flashed the word "teal." I did not shoot into the brown, but had time to choose two birds and get off two quick barrels, when three teal fell like leaves, and a fourth more like a stone, though it was only winged.

It fell into flood-water and the dog jumped the intervening dyke and quickly grabbed the diving bird in shallow water. And there, for some reason I cannot fathom, he stood with his capture in his mouth—what time the small comet of teal was seen coming in again, and, mallard, disturbed by the shot, were circling, some with set wings and dropping down towards the pool. And there stood the flaming Don, regardless of my alternatively crooning and cursing voice, and he remained thus motionless, except for wildly wagging tail until the last of the duck tribe had taken themselves off. I rather fancy that his behaviour was due to a very bad stinging by nettles he had just received, and he knew that, when he returned with his retrieve, he would have to push his way through a deep fringe of nettles on either bank, the same through which he had dashed a few minutes before when it rained teal.

He does not fear nettles in the usual course of events, and will face anything to get at his "game." But recently he has hunted out a jungle-like wood for pheasants that is a solid mass of nettles, and, once or twice, has been so badly stung that he has been almost unconscious of what he is doing, even to the extent of walking away from me with his bird, not knowing what he was about.

# SECOND ROUND

*by Henry Fletcher*

IN the issue for September 28 of *The Shooting Times* I gave an account of the decline of a grouse moor in Yorkshire, which had reached such a pitch by the end of last season, that the tenants of the shooting were well-nigh in despair. Here was a moor, which in the past could be relied upon to give a bag of some 700 to 900 brace in the year, but which, for some reason or other, was so deficient in stock when the season opened in 1955, that after a day and a half's driving in August, all shooting was abandoned for the year. The position was, in fact, so bad, that on a beat where three years before 120 brace had been killed in a day, eight guns could produce only three brace between them by lunch time. And the bag for the whole season was 26 brace all told.

It seemed as though the prospects of the moor for years to come were almost hopeless, and the chance of any shooting in 1956 practically nil. It was decided that any question of shooting in the future must be subordinated to the needs of the moor and the restitution of an adequate stock. In my article I told how a tentative trial had ended in bags being made on each of the three beats far beyond our most sanguine expectations; so much so, indeed, that we felt justified in arranging to shoot these three beats once more in a fortnight's time.

The number of grouse killed the first time over had been 75 brace, 83½ and 46 brace respectively. Perhaps it may now be of interest if I put on record the result of this second round.

**The First Drive**

We were fortunate in that the weather was fine and settled both before and during the three days in question. The beats were taken in the same order, starting at the southern end. The first drive of the day is important, as it is intended to feed those that follow. I was in a good position to see up and down the line, and I thought there were just as many grouse coming over as on the first occasion, and this impression was confirmed by a pick-up of about 20 brace, the same as before.

The drive was not however so successful in putting birds on to the ground which was to be driven later on, and decidedly fewer birds were seen during the rest of the day. All the same, the shooting of this beat a second time was fully justified, and the bag of 57½ brace compared not unfavourably with the 75 brace killed the first time over.

The next day we drove the middle beat. During the first and second drives the number of grouse seen was not as good as before; but there were nevertheless quite enough birds to convince us that we were right in still further reducing the number of grouse on this beat, which were to be left as breeding stock for the following year. The third drive was over good strong heather, and a fine lot of grouse came over, quite as many I should say as on the opening day. The afternoon shooting consists of a repetition of the second and third drives.

Possibly the shooting was not as good, but apart from this, there were definitely fewer birds at which to shoot. Either they were not there, or, more probably, some of the coveys had carried too far, or else had drifted out at the side, and so failed to come over the guns a second time. All the same we had a pleasant day, and were by no means dissatisfied with a count of 58½ brace at its close. This made a total of 142 brace for the beat where only three brace had been shot the year before.

I can offer no explanation which satisfies me for this sudden transition from absolute poverty to comparative wealth. Perhaps there were some late broods the year before, which did not show up when this middle beat was driven. Or maybe some stock moved in from other parts of the moor. Possibly there was some migration from some moor or moors in the vicinity, but this seems improbable, because other moors, in just the same way, have shown better results than had been expected, and they cannot all have been reinforced by migratory stock. Undoubtedly it was a good breeding season, and I think this must be the main reason for results far beyond anything that seemed remotely possible.

As it might have some bearing on this subject, I may perhaps mention that a new keeper had taken over the moor at the beginning of the year, and on his advice a plentiful supply of quartz grit had been scattered widely in places where the grouse would be sure to find it, and this may well have had a beneficial effect upon their health. The only main road near the moor is of tarred macadam, and any sources of natural grit are extremely limited. Unless therefore these are supplemented in some way or other, a point may be reached when the grouse population must be seriously affected by the absence of this essential for their well-being. Any improvement in the general health of the grouse might easily be reflected in the size of the broods they produced.

**Farm Transport**

In marked contrast to the wild and wet weather experienced earlier on, our third day dawned bright and with only a moderate breeze. On this, the northern beat, there is a long uphill walk from the farm, where the Land Rovers are left, to the luncheon hut on the edge of the moor. The farmer provides a tractor and a two-wheeled truck, into which gun-cases and cartridges, crates of beer, luncheon baskets, and the impedimenta generally of the shooting party are loaded, and the contraption then pursues a somewhat devious route to its destination.

When I was offered a seat in the truck, no doubt in deference to my age and infirmities, I had a clear recollection of my uphill climb a fortnight earlier, and decided to give this form of transport a trial. I was told that owing to the swaying of the truck it was advisable to keep my centre of gravity as low as possible, so I sat on a coat on the floor, and off we started with the tractor snorting like fury. There was a certain amount of buffeting of course as we followed a rutted farm track and then careered over the rough ground beyond it. Perhaps it might not be too much of an exaggeration to say the truck gave a passable imitation of a ship at sea in a storm. Be this as it may, it must have done my liver a world of good, besides saving my legs, and I should be willing to travel that way again, if invited to do so.

**An Incident Remembered**

We did not see as many birds during the first drive as before. So far as my own experience went at this drive, my contribution to the bag was limited to two grouse, and, if I tell the whole truth, these were killed with one shot.

The second drive was not far short of its previous standard, and for me it was marked by a small incident which I still remember. Not far behind my butt was a deep ravine, and two grouse, hard hit, crossed its brink, but did not appear against the skyline on the far side. They might, of course, have turned right-handed up the glen, or downwards to the lower ground through which the stream flows. Apart from the duty of searching for any wounded birds, there was some hope that we might find one or both of them. There was also the advantage that this would take us to the luncheon hut at just the right time to be there.

*The guns on the third day, and Rob near the spot where he found the third grouse.*

Rob, the spaniel, set off eagerly to quarter the bank, first on one side of a stone wall, and then on the other. He found one, and then, a little time afterwards, retrieved the other. But he did more than that; he picked up another rather lightly wounded grouse, which was crouching in a small trench within ten yards of the door of the hut, and which had probably been shot by the gun on my left.

There are only two lines of butts on this section of the moor, so these are occupied again after lunch. At the first I was in No. 1 butt, and as the birds have a tendency to drift down parallel with the line and cross it at the lower end, I did not get much shooting.

*(Continued on page 708, col. 2)*

# Infirmity of Purpose

*by Eric Grimley*

"INFIRM of purpose, give me the daggers" is a quotation familiar to all of us. It is adaptable as a taunt against people like myself who, in late summer and early autumn, suffer agonies of indecision when faced with the choice of gun or fishing-rod—and often compromise in an attempt to have the best of two enchanting worlds.

It was just such a compromise, or infirmity of purpose, that gave my Norwegian friend

*Ole, Bang and Gunnar on Gunnar's "field."*

Gunnar and his cronies of the chase scope for vulgar pleasantries at my expense.

Gunnar had again done me the honour of inviting me to join him and his regular guests for the opening week of the Norwegian grouse shooting season on his "field"—as he calls it—the said "field" being some ten thousand acres of mountainous wilderness north of Trondheimsfjord.

We had crossed the fjord early in the morning by ferry-steamer and were trudging our weary, rucksack-laden way over the trackless expanse of upland valley whose ultimate lake, called Hestdalsvannet—or Horse Valley Water—lends its name to Gunnar's domain, when Gunnar broke the news to me that I would not be sleeping with him and the others within the bunk-lined walls of the hytte.

"We are seven peoples and six beds," he said. "One, therefore, must sleep at Hindrumseter. I and my friends has taken much thought on this matter. We remember you once before stayed at the *seter,* and that you had much joy from the playing of the guitar and the singing of the goat-girl and her sisters in the evenings after the hunting. Therefore, we wish you to sleep there again. It is also to be said that we Norwegians has our wives a little too near in Trondheim, and we do not wish to make a scandal on this way."

"That's all right," I replied, remembering the attractive eighteen-year-old Annethe and her younger sisters. "Anyway, there's safety in numbers."

**Sweet Seventeen . . .**

Gunnar looked at me doubtfully for a moment . . . "Annethe and her sisters stay down on the farm," he confessed. "It is only her cousin Elna at the *seter.*"

"Sweet seventeen," Ole chimed in, "and the prettiest girl in all Norway . . ."

The *seteriente,* or goat-girl, was not at home when we called at the *seter* in passing, so I dumped all that I would not need for the afternoon's shoot, and then we continued on our way until Gunnar came to a halt for a moment on a low eminence above a miniature lake, or pond.

"There is trouts of six kilo and more in there," he remarked, "many times I see the big ripples as I pass by, but I think they is uneager to take the fly or the sluk. It is no matter. On this trip we shall eat grooses and, it may be, blackbirds."

The day was young when, full of Gunnar's excellent *lapskaus,* we set off to see what the three setters could find for us on the rolling mountain slopes, ragged with the coarse and varied vegetation which clothes the bouldered spurs and the boggy valleys.

We did not move in a disciplined line, as in the best of shooting families, but in bunches of twos and threes. Conversation was unrestrained, but I knew that each of my companions would be instantly aware of any action by the dogs suggestive of grouse tainted air-currents, and that at the first "point" each would make a great show of appearing not to hurry while doing his best to be the first to arrive within close proximity of the pointing dog.

It so happened, however, that the first point was by Gunnar's English setter Bang, and that it took place a bare ten yards from where I strolled with Gunnar, listening to his discourse on the strange conceit of the British that moorland grouse, and the shooting of them, are peculiar to Scotland and a few favoured areas of England and Wales.

"It is my meaning," he was saying, "that the Norwegian Wikings inwaded Scotland and that in Scotland is many peoples with the blood of these Wikings. It may also be the Norwegian grooses inwaded Scotland at this time and . . . but see! the dog stands!"

**Pulling Their Bones?**

Gunnar beat me to it by a good two yards, but Bang was still standing like a rock after the other five guns had arrived and ranged themselves expectantly in close arrow-head formation on our flanks. Thus, safety catches forward and fingers on triggers, we stood for a good five minutes while Gunnar vainly tried to cajole his dog into advancing further into the grouse-tainted atmosphere.

"Urhuh—Urhuh," Gunnar's cough had an unnatural quality about it. It failed in its purpose of shaming the birds into the good sportsmanship of flight, but it was infectious, and each of us in turn coughed or cleared his throat in varying degrees of self-consciousness. But the birds did not stir; nor did Bang . . .

We resorted to other staccato, terroristic noises; even to throwing such missiles as we could find on the ground or in our pockets—but to no avail.

"So!" said Gunnar eventually, addressing Bang's feathery stern, "you pull our bones! I think it is not more grooses there. We . . ." In that same moment there was a startling commotion among the junipers close to our feet, and a sort of feathered bomb-shell exploded upwards, to depart at high speed in whirring flight.

I was the first to fire. I nearly always am too "quick on the draw" with a shotgun, and I missed with both barrels before the wily old cock bird was twenty yards distant. Following my bad example, Gunnar loosed off three rounds rapid with his pump-gun as the old bird, scolding us harshly, wheeled on a downward slant over a minor precipice and disappeared round a bluff, stuttering a final challenge to our right to be abroad in his domain.

"So!" . . . Gunnar looked across at me. "It is not Bang, but the groose which joke us!"

It was a bad start to an afternoon which provided many birds, showed the working of the dogs to good advantage, and which, without lowering anyone else's conceit, allowed Gunnar and me to recover ours.

But, as the hot September afternoon began to merge into the lesser warmth of early evening, my thoughts returned to the big trout in the little lake on whose bank we had paused. I had shot my share of the dozen or more brace of birds which weighted our rucksacks and experienced the consequent glow of happiness in good measure. Tomorrow's September evening might be wet or chilly. Gunnar and the others would surely understand if I explained that the chance of a ten or twelve pound trout meant more to me than another brace or two of grouse. And so it was that, the next time there was a lull in the proceedings, I explained the urge which was upon me.

"It is in ordnury. You will, if you please, do as you wish," Gunnar said at once, "but I do not think you will become one of these trouts."

**Towards the Lake**

Ole winked at his companions . . . "It is, I think, a bigger fish that he will catch," he said with a chuckle.

"For such fishing it is better to wait for darkness," said Erling. "And to put brandy in the water," added Bernt.

Gunnar's eyes twinkled through his glasses, "They pull your bones about the *seterjente*—the goat-girl Elna," he said. "It is a rudness. Do not lay heed to it."

Nevertheless their remarks obtruded themselves into my thoughts as I tramped across Gunnar's "field" on my way back to the *seter* to fetch my fishing-rod and tackle. "The prettiest girl in all Norway," Ole had said. Certainly any cousin of Annethe might well be that. Before long the thought of the monster trout ceased to be the only spur to my haste.

The *seter* was still unoccupied when I reached it, but the table in the main room was neatly laid for a meal.

Within five minutes, fishing-rod in hand, I was striding towards the little lake, confident that on such a warm and tranquil evening the

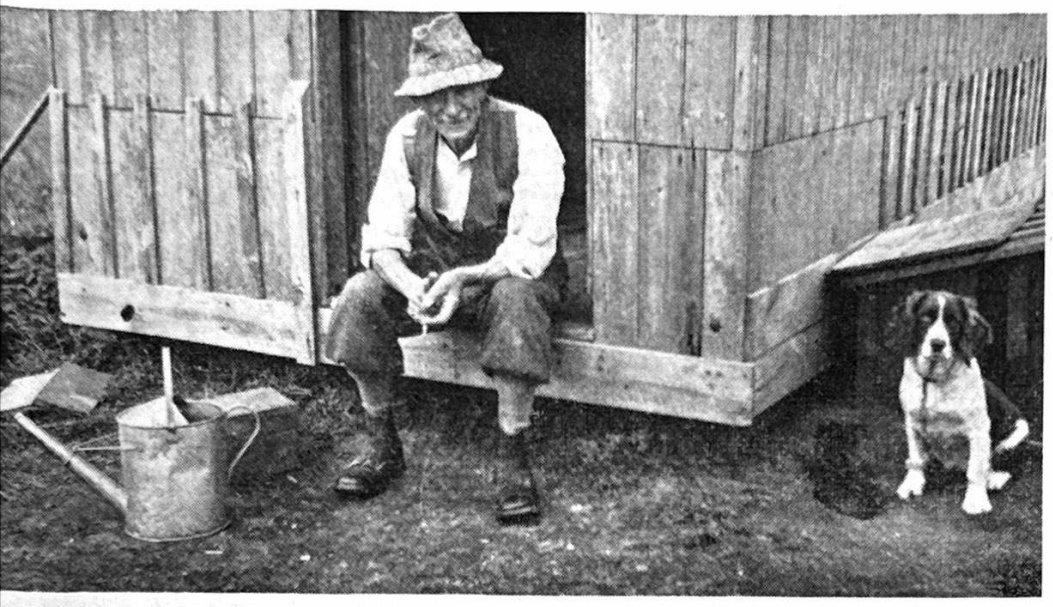
*There is trout of six kilo and more in there.*

monster trout would be interested in a skilfully thrown sedge or, as the light began to fade, a coachman.

I approached cautiously by way of the bluff on which we had stood, and finally crawled on hands and knees until I could see down on to the surface of the water.

My heart nearly burst through its encasing ribs when I saw ever-widening concentric circles of ripples, so pronounced that they were like miniature waves, billowing towards the peaty shores of the lake. No ordinary fish could have caused them!

*(Continued on page 715, col. 3)*



*The backbone of game preservation today.*

# Round the Game Preserves

*by David Imrie*

RECENTLY I mentioned that I knew a moor which had been short of two keepers for months. Since then I have heard of another estate (low ground this time) in exactly the same predicament. Those bits of information made me think hard; and I came to the conclusion that, apart from other causes which I shall consider later, keepers must be scarcer than they were in pre-war days in proportion to the situations available. To support this theory, advertisements for keepers have sometimes appeared more than once lately for the same job, and one Scottish estate advertised for keepers in several journals for weeks and weeks within the last year.

Evidently the depressed state of game preservation for about 10 years after the beginning of the war is responsible for a dearth of experienced younger keepers now. During that period very few lads were taken on to compensate for retirals among the older generation. No game was reared then. It was, in fact, illegal to give grain to pheasants and partridges. And for a long time it was hardly possible to get shooters even to deal with wild-bred birds. So gamekeeping offered no prospects to a youth at that time.

There has been a remarkable revival, however, in game preservation since the restrictions on hand rearing were removed. This year I heard of many rearing programmes. One man with whom I spoke the other day had reared 2,500 pheasants, and four figures have been general. The question seems to be now: "Will the scarcity of competent men slow up this revival, or will shoot owners manage somehow to get keepers of a sort to carry on the good work?"

**Housing Conditions**

We must bear in mind, of course, that a repetition of advertisements from the same source do not *always* indicate that keepers have not applied for the situation. Perhaps the place did not appeal to the applicants; for keepers are not so willing nowadays as they were formerly to take any old shack in the backwoods. They (or their wives!) demand houses in conformity with modern standards. They want electricity, hot and cold water, proximity to a bus route, and large airy rooms. Few keepers now would accept the house which I saw the other day, although a contented keeper lived in it for 33 years, and reared a family there. It was situated on the edge of a moor with a conifer wood between it and the roadway, and it had no water supply whatever, unless there was a rainwater butt which I failed to notice. Every drop of drinking water used in that house was carted in a barrel from a distance.

Another keeper's house known to me had two supplies of water, but they were both 50 yards from the door. One supply was a well in the meadow in front (with the inevitable trout in residence); and the other came down an open runnel into a tub near the gateway. One hopes that these supplies never became frozen hard, but the runnel near the gateway certainly dried up during a prolonged drought. On the whole they were unsatisfactory; and the house would not attract a present-day keeper.

**Keepers' Bothies**

And this lack of convenience in former times extended to keepers' bothies. Unmarried men put up with conditions which sometimes made their lives unnecessarily difficult. Two men, for instance, would be asked to make one small room serve them as a kitchen, dining room, sitting room, and bedroom, while gardeners on the same estate had separate bedrooms, a woman to cook their meals, and water inside their bothy. In addition to the inconvenience suffered by the young keepers on the estate which I am quoting as an example, their bothy was used as a meeting house for all the keepers on the estate. People sat on their beds, when sufficient chairs were not available for the company, and no-one asked permission to enter the place. A slip-shod organisation of this sort would nowadays not be tolerated even by young men, for very long.

Another factor which decides whether a keeper's situation shall be filled quickly or otherwise is the wage. At one time keepers were not generally well paid in cash, although they had perquisites of considerable value. They often got coal, logs, paraffin, a suit of clothes, and a free house. They could also have many a cheap meal of rabbit and pigeon, if they had an inclination that way. On the whole they did not do badly; for they were not so faddy about accommodation as we are today.

But now those perquisites are seldom offered gratis, as it were, excepting perhaps the suit of clothes. The rent of the house is deducted from the pay packet; the keeper has to buy fire and light himself, and pay cartage on logs supplied by the estate; and rabbits had become valuable to the shoot owner before disease put them temporarily out of the picture. Probably no employer would grudge his keeper at present a meal of pigeon, but the keeper would certainly have to shoot this item with his own cartridges.

One must admit that this new system is quite just. Business is business; and if an employer is compelled to fork out extra money to make a keeper's situation attractive, he is entitled to get as many benefits himself as he legally can, otherwise he might not be able to carry on with game preservation in an age of high taxation. But business ought not to be carried too far, because it is then apt to defeat its own purpose. The keeper must have a suitable cash wage apart from anything else, and a failure here on the employer's side probably accounts for some of those unfilled situations as well as a general scarcity of experienced men.

**A Poor System**

A few years ago I spoke to a headkeeper (now dead) who told me of a system adopted by his estate for paying at least one of the undermen. This underling got a ridiculously low cash wage plus 3d. per pound of rabbit caught by him. No doubt, he was able to make a fair sum per week for part of the year; but there must have been times when he could hardly have brought home a reasonable wage. In any case, the anxiety of having always to think of rabbits first must have made him less efficient as a keeper.

"Stonehenge" a sporting journalist of last century, had the right idea when he wrote: "Some few shillings a week may be saved in the wages of the keeper, but I am persuaded that economy here is badly invested. A *really good* keeper is worth the sum I have named, in the Scotch or Yorkshire market; and he is so difficult to get that I would rather give less for the moor and more for the man than adopt the other alternative. Between a good man and a middling one there is a difference of at least 50 per cent in the quantity of game . . . My advice, therefore, is to get a first-rate gamekeeper at any price." The wage named by "Stonehenge" was 24s. per week, which was an exceedingly good one in 1855.

But whether a keeper then got a good wage or not he had a tremendous lot of moral support to sustain him; and although moral support cannot take the place of material advantages, it has a psychological value which must not be underestimated. During the whole of last century gamekeepers had the firm backing of the most powerful class in the country; and during most of that century the law was also strongly on the side of the game preserver. No doubt, much of the law in this respect remains the same now, but the penalties have lost their power to discourage poaching. Furthermore, there was competition among landed proprietors formerly to produce the biggest head of game.

Nowadays he is not in such a strong position as he was. Busybodies and cranks have meddled with his job increasingly. In the middle of 1958 he will probably lose the gin trap which has caught more vermin than anything else invented by man. That date will coincide with the return of rabbits in big numbers. He has had to stand aside while scientists have experimented with myxomatosis and narcotics, and he has been instructed by well-meaning but ignorant people on the best means of controlling rabbits. So when advertisements for keepers fail to attract applicants, we are apt to wonder how many factors, in addition to the understandable scarcity of young keepers, have a bearing on the matter.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Letters and photographs are invited for this page. They should be as brief as possible, and the names and addresses of senders must be given, though these need not necessarily be published. Correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, The Shooting Times & Country Magazine, 29 Old Bond Street, London, W.1. 'Phone: HYDe Park 2556/2557.*

### PAST AND PRESENT

Sir,—With regard to "Tower-Bird's" article entitled as above (issue October 5), I am writing to correct an historical error of over 1,000 years, when he refers to—"Palladius, whose work on husbandry is assigned to about 1420 . . ."

Palladius was a Roman author of the Fouth century A.D. and his work "De Re Rustica" (on agriculture) to which I presume "Tower-Bird" refers, was probably written in about A.D. 350.

M. I. L. ROBERTS,
Crosby, Liverpool.

["Tower-Bird" writes: "As our correspondent will realise by my article, I was quoting word for word from the book mentioned. I, myself, wondered whether the date 1420 was not a misprint (in the book) for 420. But I also wondered whether there could be another Palladius who wrote on husbandry a thousand years or so later. I think, however, that a misprint must be the answer."—Ed.]

### "THE CAMP FIRE"

Sir,—I should be so much obliged if any reader could tell me where I can obtain a copy of a book of poems written in camp in the Crimean War by Major H. J. Leveson ("The Old Shekarry") entitled "The Camp Fire," published by A. E. Bailey and Co., Cornhill, 1866, and dedicated to Lady Stratford de Redcliffe.

Or perhaps readers may know of a bookshop where I should be likely to find a copy. Major Leveson was my uncle and led a very adventurous life, and was a famous big game shooter. He wrote several books.

(Miss) P. K. LEVESON,
12 Harrington Gardens,
London, S.W.7.

[Can any reader help Miss Leveson?—Ed.]

### PERMISSION TO SHOOT

Sir,—I am enclosing part of an article (entitled "Hold Your Fire") which appeared in *The Southern Weekly*, by "Slim Coulter" (October 5 issue). In the first part of the article he deals fully and firmly with his brother farmers who shoot duck before September 1, suggesting that it is merely an excuse when the defence is that the birds were shot because they were damaging laid barley; and saying that "bangers," though not altogether effective on pigeon and pheasants, would keep the duck off laid patches.

The remainder of the article speaks for itself, and I hope you can find space to print at least the more essential parts.

S.G.D.,
London.

[Thank you for the cutting, printed below.—Ed.]

Last week *The Shooting Times* returned to the attack in a leading article that chastised the farming community in pretty sharp terms on its attitude to this and other shooting problems. Having wholeheartedly endorsed its censure on a broken close season I feel licensed to crack a friendly lance on a rather different topic.

Mr. Stanley Evans invented the "feather-bed farmer." In the correspondence columns of *The Shooting Times* there has gradually been built up a companion figure, one embellished with the same glaze of travesty. This is the wrongheaded old cuss who allows his patrimony to be devoured by pigeons while refusing the free remedy offered by trigger-hungry young readers.

To refute this, however, I and my shooting partner have permission for pigeon-shooting on some 30 farms in the district. Some of these, of course, don't get a visit over a lapse of several years. And in most harvests, too, pigeons are seen feeding on fresh ground. We then go along and ask permission, and it is hardly ever refused. In fact, I can think of only one instance since the war.

Why then, does ingenious youth, raised in the best sporting traditions . . . so often get a raspberry? The answer is that he asks for general rather than particular permission. He wants to wander over somebody's farm with a gun whenever he happens to feel like it.

Unfortunately for him, few farmers lightly give this kind of leave. I feel sure that not one of my occasional hosts would allow me this, and I should not think of asking for it.

In brief, the two main reasons against general permission are, first, that it upsets the landlord if the farmer is a tenant, and, second, that it upsets his farm man if the right to carry a gun is part of their perks, as, nowadays, it usually is.

On the other hand, most farmers will agree to a proposition of definite time and place. Ask: "Can I shoot the pigeons on your wheat on Thursday?" or, "May I clear the magpies out of the Long Wood on Saturday afternoon?" and we old curmudgeons will almost invariably consent. Although my family say that none of us can even hang a picture, I maintain that we are practical men who like practical ways.

*Seen at one angle, the sign shows a blackbird with eggs; at the other angle, a blackbird feeding young. (See letter "Remarkable Inn Signs.")*

### REMARKABLE INN SIGNS

Sir,—There is no end to the numbers of odd and remarkable inn-signs, but I suggest that the Blackbird Inn between Taunton and Wellington would take some beating.

First, it has one dimension more than most signs, for it is not painted "flat," but is constructed of sheet metal and other materials, cut and bent in relief. Second, it is double-seen at one angle, the sign shows a blackbird with eggs; at the other angle, a blackbird feeding young.

P.S.,
Watchet, Somerset.

### SMALL-BORE RIFLE SHOOTING

Sir,—This Association has observed with interest the inclusion in recent issues of *The Shooting Times* references to and articles on the sport of small-bore shooting. We welcome the publicity which is thereby given to our popular sport which of the seven events, attracts the greatest number of entries in the Olympic Games.

There is room in a great many of our 4,200 clubs for more members and if readers who are at present primarily interested in the subject matter of your other articles care to write to the undersigned, we will gladly send the name and address of the secretary of the nearest affiliated club.

If any of your readers are interested in forming a rifle club at their place of work, or a rifle section of their social or political club, the N.S.R.A. will gladly send, free of charge, an abundant supply of literature not only to guide the appointed officials through the preliminary stages, but to help them so long as they hold such office.

A. J. PALMER,
Secretary, The National Small-Bore Rifle Association, Codrington House, 113 Southwark Street, London, S.E.1.

### THE HEAVY AIR RIFLE

Sir,—May I take this opportunity of congratulating you on a very interesting journal which I really enjoy reading.

In last week's issue there is quite a lot said about the .22 rifle used in the field. Like many people, I have tried several times for an unrestricted Firearm Certificate, and finally gave up. Instead, I bought myself a very heavy .22 air rifle of a very well-known English make and to this

The 1956
**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP**
*for* LIVE PIGEON SHOOTING
**held at Rome in June 1956, was won by**
**Mr. A. VAFIADIS of ALEXANDRIA**
using
**F.N. BROWNING OVER & UNDER GUNS**
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
**in the CHAMPIONSHIP OF EUROPE**
for CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING
OLYMPIC TRAP
held at San Sebastian on July 28th, 1956
**the first 2 places were won by Mr. Maurice Tabet and Mr. Aref Diab, both from Lebanon**
**and the first LADIES place was won by Mme. Bishof**
**ALL USING F.N. BROWNING O. & U. GUNS**
**and F.N. Legia Star High Speed Cartridges**
L. LePersonne & Co. Ltd., 7 Old Bailey, London, E.C.4
Sole Importers and Distributors to the trade of
F.N. BROWNING SPORTING GUNS

I had fitted a 3x telescopic sight. It is quite surprising the power it has. On one occasion I fired into a drey hoping to disturb a squirrel. Instead, it spun from the top and hit the ground quite dead. I fired two more shots and the same thing happened. Luck? Yes, I grant you that, but the pellets must hit very hard to go through a drey and kill a squirrel as well.

With a good range and ammunition at 5s. for 500 I am happy, and if any one else is having trouble in getting a certificate, then I think this is the next best thing.

A. G. SIMMONS,
Oxshott, Surrey.

# A Plan to Ring Adult Snipe

*by J. F. Wharton*

IF you go for a walk on a late spring evening away over in the south-west of Ireland, two things may attract your attention—the exquisite colouring of the mountains and bogs, and the endless drumming of snipe. This latter seems to go on and on right through the short night. Yet these breeding birds are only a minute proportion of the winter head that moves in and becomes resident as October advances into November. In fact, so little seems to be known about snipe movements that in all probability so-called indigenous breeding birds have in actual fact wintered elsewhere.

We know that the little jack snipe travels up into the Baltic area and Finland to breed and does not arrive back into these islands—and their satellite islands such as the Hebrides—until September. But the common snipe with its vast range across the earth is a different bird to check on, either in its individual local movement at certain periods, or in its long-distance travel from North-West Europe through Great Britain into South-West Eire.

Studying breeding snipe on water-meadows in the south of England can show how many nesting birds are about and although there nearly always appear to be more birds on the ground than one can find nests for pairs—no doubt due to polyandry—there is not much difficulty in noticing any alteration in numbers at any given time. It has become apparent that the parent birds clear off at a different time in July to their young—probably due to moulting. Then there appears to be a gap of some weeks with only an overnight straggler having a rest.

From the end of August until the end of September a few more birds are seen, rather depending on one's ground and, after that and some autumn frosts, they suddenly arrive and remain at more or less a constant head. Should the weather turn very hard later on, this head will increase provided the sheltered ditches still permit bill-probing. If this should fail they will all be off to ground on which they can feed.

**New Year Movements**

In February the main winter residents move away quite suddenly and the odd straggler or new incomer only is found. And then at the end of March or early April drumming proclaims the settling of territories, their claiming and consolidation—and these again appear to be new birds.

Snipe move chiefly by night except in very hard weather and they feed both by day and by night on worms and fresh water snails. No doubt the lack of these is the reason for likely looking snipe ground never holding a bird.

I found some time ago that when the weather was hard and the snipe were in, they were easy to catch at night, provided there was no moon in the sky. I employed a Tilly-lamp with a clean glass and a dark non-shiny, muslin butterfly net, this latter being round with a three foot diameter and a pocket depth of five feet. A handle of four feet seemed to be quite sufficient.

If one wandered slowly along ditches and rushy flood-pools holding the lamp waist high and well in front of the body, it was not at all difficult to sight a crouching bird disturbed in the act of feeding. I found I could advance up to the semi-crouching bird when, at a distance of from four to six feet, it would fly right up to within a a few inches of the lamp and remain hovering there for three or four seconds before proceeding upwards into the night.

Incidentally, teal would never do this and although temporarily blinded, they trusted to luck and climbed straight up into the darkness. In certain cases along one particular ditch the overhead branches of an oak tree always caused downfalls and a second attempt before getting away. This repeatedly happened with, I am sure, the same birds.

**Netted, Ringed and Released**

But getting back to the waders. It seems that a fairly satisfactory number of adult snipe might quite easily be netted, ringed, and released again by adopting the above method. I propose ringing these birds during November and my intended area will be the bogs of western Cork between Kinsale and Bantry Bay. I shall hope to put rings on about 200 birds. These identification tabs will bear a serial number and records will be kept as to map reference of bog, date, weather conditions, number of birds about, etc. Suitable publication at the time of ringing denoting to whom a recovered bird is to be reported should cover most of the shooting men and their keepers.

It will be interesting to discover whether one recaptures a bird the following night which has been previously ringed in a bog twenty miles back. But the real satisfaction will be to receive reports of ring-bearing birds shot or found dead in other counties or countries in future months or years.

Should the Editor permit me to enquire, I should be more than delighted to hear of any other naturalists or shooting men sufficiently interested to come in on this scheme from different areas.

[We shall be glad to forward on any letters addressed to Mr. Wharton at this office.—Editor.]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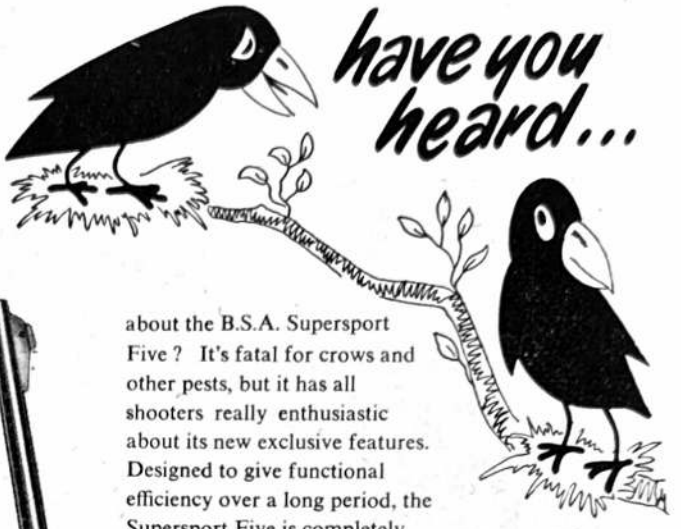


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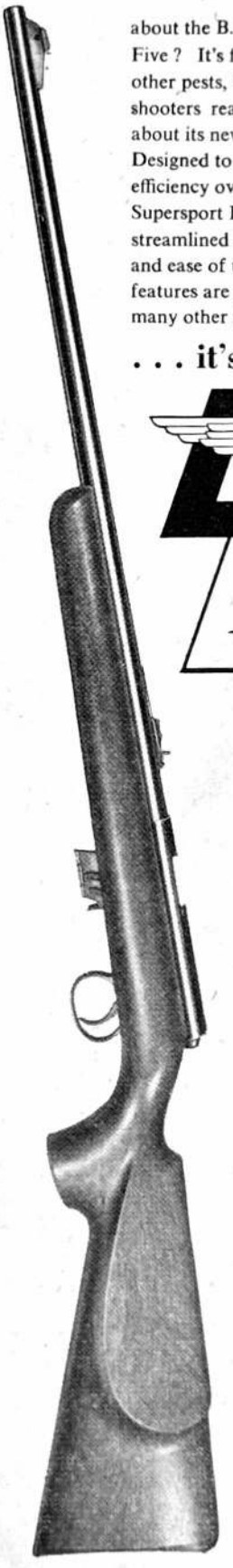

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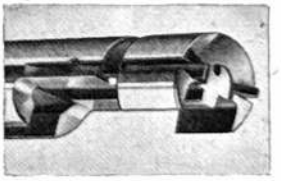

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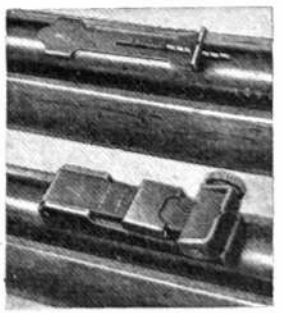

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# Partridge Rearing

*by P. H. Whitaker*

ALTHOUGH the status of partridges in this country has been the subject of mounting alarm and despondency during recent seasons, until it has now reached a crescendo of concern, the problem can trace its origin back many decades and to many different factors.

More than a hundred years ago, A. E. Knox, in his delightful "Game Birds and Wildfowl," opened his book with the following words: "Among our native game birds there is not one more essentially *fera natura* than the common partridge, and yet there is none whose increase and welfare have been so directly favoured by the improvements in modern agriculture."

He was writing at the time of "refined husbandry" in England, better, systematic farming, increased cornland, alternating with thick root crops, but the warning note is sounded early in his treatise, for he goes on to mention "certain recent refinements that are decidedly injurious to the welfare of this bird, and others which must be earnestly depreciated by the sportsman."

Reading further, one cannot help forming the opinion that the accent is on the latter, and that more concern is shown for the inconvenience incurred by the sportsman than that suffered by the partridge, due to lack of thick and holding cover. Nevertheless, the grubbing up of hedgerows and the shaving of the stubble by the newly-introduced fagging hook, in place of the sickle, are forerunners of similar complaints that were to be magnified and echoed down the years.

Since then partridges and partridge shooting have passed through good to bad and worse times, and the reasons for the decline, some speculative, others definite, have been many.

**Positive Action**

To discuss them all again in detail would merely be tedious. By now we know the words of the lament too well. Vermin, grass-cutting, poaching, overshooting, sprays and weed-killers, climate, seed dressings, in-breeding and so on. But the important thing to remember is that not one of these hazards is by itself entirely to blame. All are contributory causes, and under modern conditions all combine too closely for the good of the partridge.

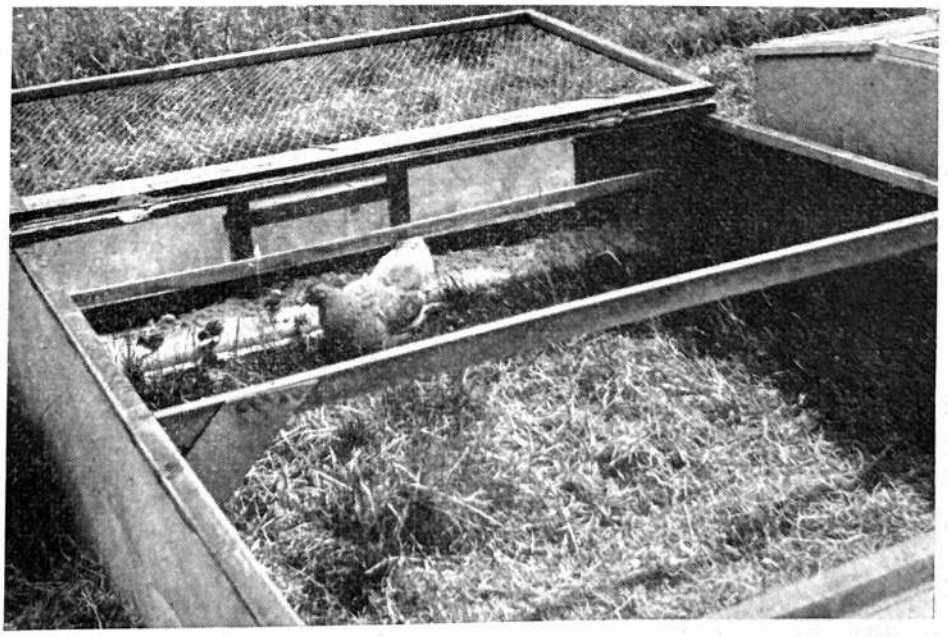
It seems to me that even if complete control of all these difficulties were suddenly possible, which, of course it is not—and I am afraid I am too much of a pessimist (or realist) to hope for countrywide co-operation even in those matters which are not beyond control—it is now too late to reclaim our losses and improve the position by strictly natural means. It would also take too long, and the time has come when instead of reducing our shooting further for the sake of unpredictable seasons to come we should take immediate and energetic steps to increase it in the shortest possible time by doing something positive. Had we relied entirely on wild pheasants it is extremely doubtful whether pheasant stocks would be in the strong position that they occupy today. By applying the same principle to partridges, and putting more birds on to the land instead of being satisfied with trying to save the few that are left we may yet see the partridge restored to its former glory.

All of which leads to the conclusion, happily now realised by a number of estates, that we must hand-rear partridges. More to the point is, how are we going to do it, and although there are difficulties, none of them appears insuperable. Of course, partridge rearing is no new thing; many keepers have reared the birds in varying numbers in the past. What is new, however, is the method, and with all the modern feedstuffs, pens and other equipment, the undertaking is less trouble and not so precarious as it was.

**Breeding in Captivity**

To hark back again, Knox, by the way, claims that there is scarcely an instance of partridges ever having bred in captivity, and Yarrell mentions only one instance, as far as he was aware. That, presumably, was because few people had ever bothered to experiment with what were then plentiful birds, other than for the interest value; what would have been the point of such a test? That partridges will and do breed in captivity there is no doubt at all; in fact I was told at Fordingbridge that there was no stopping them and no delay when the cock bird was introduced to the hen after the sexes had been kept well apart in separate pens until early March, by which time the mating instinct is strong and they are overdue for pairing.

The breeding of birds from hand-reared stock is partridge farming, as opposed to partridge rearing, and is obviously only possible after an initial venture into the latter operation. Once some birds have been reared a number can be kept back as breeding stock, while the rest are released. What is of immediate importance is how to start. As far as the partridge rearer is concerned, the egg comes before the chicken. One day perhaps, and in the near future we hope, it will be possible to buy partridge eggs on a large scale from game farms. At present this is not the case, nor is their importation from the Continent permitted, due to strict fowl pest regulations. The only ways in which the potential rearer of partridges can obtain his supply are to collect some from over-large clutches; to



*Partridge chicks, with broody in attendance, enjoying the dusting tray and sun parlour in a movable pen. There is no coop, but a shelter at the photographer's end of the pen.*

save those from nests cut out in grassfields, or where vermin have disturbed or destroyed the sitting birds; to beg them from other estates, to take them from nests in exposed and dangerous places, or to collect early clutches. In the last instance he will be wise to destroy the nests so that the birds will make seconds and lay again elsewhere.

Having thus procured his eggs he will entrust them to the care of broodies which will have been "steadied to sit," for three or four days previously on dummy partridge (not hens') eggs. The selection of the broody hen is a matter of considerable importance, as anyone who has never reared anything more difficult than a chicken will appreciate. Some hens are excellent mothers, but many are notoriously and stupidly clumsy, and even if they sit well and do not destroy the eggs, within seconds of the vital moment of hatching they will trample their brood to destruction with large and awkward feet. Especially is this so in these days of intensive poultry rearing, when the steady old barndoor hen is hard to come by and her modern counterparts have had most of the natural instinct bred out of them.

Small eggs call for lightweight broodies in proportion, bantamweights in fact, and bantams are the ideal foster mothers for partridges.

From my short experience of various types of bantams, I know only too well that a number of breeds make poor mothers—in fact some of my birds, particularly the game, never seem to go broody at all. But the good old cross-breeds, at which neighbouring fanciers hardly deign to sniff, prove faithful, if mongrel, matriarchs of a high order. Buff Rocks, Orpingtons and Sussex look the part and live up to it, as I can vouch. I am told, too, that Cochins and Silkie crosses are as good. Fifteen eggs per broody is as good and safe a scale as any on which to work. Then she settles down and we settle down to wait—and hope.

All being well—the nest, a hay lined shallow scoop in fine earth is kept damp, the broody is handled gently and lifted off for a quarter of an hour each day to feed—in about 24 days' time the eggs will hatch, and the next and the most vital stage is reached.

The most convenient system of partridge rearing, especially for the small shoot owner with little time and help available, is undoubtedly that which employs movable pens, one of which, with shelter, sun parlour and dust bath, is shown on the opposite page. Safe from vermin and the elements, and yet with plenty of room to move about, partridge chicks thus housed require the minimum of supervision. For the first week the pens need no moving, and after that they should be shifted (except in very wet weather) every day unless the grass is plentiful, and they must be moved carefully to avoid injuring the chicks.

A partridge chick is little larger than the proverbial bumble-bee. This is an advantage to the rearer insofar as the tiny bird requires only a small quantity of food, which immediately reduces expense, but at the same time, that food must be of a high quality, rich in protein value, and easily digestible. In its wild state the young partridge can pick and choose a suitable diet of weed seeds, ant eggs etc., over a large area, but confined to a pen it is unable to forage for itself, and must rely on substitute, artificial food containing as many of the necessary ingredients as possible. Modern science applied to feeding stuffs has largely solved this problem, but not, as yet, entirely, and we are not yet in a position to adopt one complete and simple chick feed "out of a packet." Effort, expense and preparation have been minimised, but it appears that some of the old feeding principles must still be considered in conjunction with the new.

*Partridge chicks require easily digested, high protein food, and finely sieved, hard-boiled eggs are an important part of the diet.*

On correct feeding in the initial stages depends the greater part of the success of the venture, and the first fortnight is a critical stage.

At this point I can do no better than quote the I.C.I. formula for the fine, high protein meal successfully used in rearing trials, which shows that several ingredients are important, for best results, and "any old meal" will not do. Time may show, however, that simpler feeding stuffs—balanced chick crumbs, for instance—will prove adequate, and it would be interesting to hear reports in this respect from others who have undertaken recent rearing experiments.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Maize meal (very fine) .. | 26 | per cent |
| Soya bean flour .. .. | 30 | per cent |
| Dried skim milk .. .. | 30 | per cent |
| Dried powdered yeast .. | 2 | per cent |
| Fish meal (very fine) .. | 8 | per cent |
| Bone flour .. .. | 1 | per cent |
| Lime flour .. .. | 1 | per cent |
| Cod liver oil .. .. | 2 | per cent |
| Salt .. .. .. | 0.5 | per cent |

This meal is used to dry off finely sieved, hard-boiled eggs (during the first week, when the recommended ratio is half egg yolk and half meal, three bantams' eggs are enough for one feed for 120 chicks) and for the first seven to ten days the yolks only should be added. After that, whole eggs may be used.

It would appear that much depends on the addition of the eggs. A friend who is a member of a Wiltshire syndicate tells me that their keeper attempted to rear partridges this year with poor results. His neighbour fared much better, and enquiry showed that while in other respects identical pen systems were used, the latter fed hard-boiled eggs, but the former excluded them from the diet.

**Cleanliness Counts**

Further feeding details are to be found in the excellent handbooks issued free by the I.C.I. Experimental Game Station at Fordingbridge, but two important points are worthy of mention here. Feeding utensils must always be kept scrupulously clean, for sour food is indigestible and dirt encourages disease. The chicks should not be left with too much food, but initially only allowed as much as they can consume in about ten minutes.

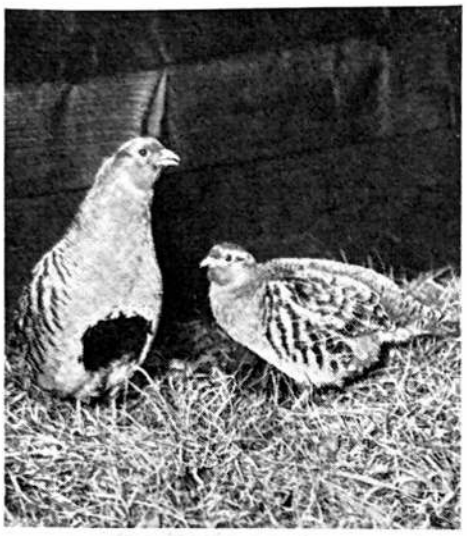
In the long run it saves time, trouble and prevents the chicks' access to indigestible large corn if the broody is not given her own special ration, but is left to take her share of chick food. A good broody will see that her charges get first pick, and is not greedy. She will, however, require water and her drinking tin can be fixed to the side of the pen out of reach of the chicks.

If all goes well, and according to the book, the time will come when the partridge rearer finds himself with a large number of strong, healthy birds on his hands, and he is then up against his last, but not least problem. How

*Winter feeding is an essential part of partridge conservation. Hoppers which save time and trouble are the modern method, but the old-fashioned way is better than no feeding at all.*

is he going to release them, and ensure even distribution over his shoot? There is little point in lifting the hatches and letting them all go together, for even when the broods are released at different points on the estate they tend to pack, and such an action would only result in the foundation of one vast concourse. Nor is it a sound principle to release all the birds at strategic points just before the shooting season and then shoot them hard.

At the end of a shooting season there is



*A cock displays to his hen in a mating pen.*

inevitably a surplus of cock partridges on the ground, and we all know the trouble that these can cause in the breeding season. In view of this, the most recent and commonsense suggestion is to release the hand-reared cock birds before September and hold back the hens until pairing time, say mid-January, depending on the weather. In this way the shooting stock is immediately increased, and the later released hens will absorb the surplus cock birds. At the same time, a few pairs can be kept in pens over the winter, and mated in March for egg production. Then the cycle begins all over again.

Whatever method of releasing the birds is favoured, and however disappointingly they behave at first from a sporting point of view, it is worth remembering that as breeding stock they will prove invaluable. And at the present time, when they are in most areas so thin on the ground, this is the prime reason for rearing partridges.

## Second Round

*(Continued from page 701)*

When the drive was over the flanker on my right asked for Rob's assistance in finding two birds hit by the gun next to me, which had dropped nearly half a mile behind the line. He marched with every sign of confidence to a point in the middle of a large patch of thick heather, and within a couple of minutes the dog had picked up the bird. He then moved to another spot about thirty yards away, and the dog repeated his performance equally quickly. I have not for years seen such accurate marking, taking the distance into account, and such prompt success must have given this keen-eyed watcher a real thrill.

The last drive of the day was a poor one in comparison with the one a fortnight before. The birds did not come back as they should have done. The inference was that either most of them had gone beyond the boundary, or had taken themselves off to the low ground outside the limit of the drive. All the same, the bag for the day was 51 brace, or five brace in excess of the first time over. We had taken 97 brace off a beat which was thought to be not worth shooting the year before. We had also in the course of the second three days gathered 167 brace, as compared with 204½ brace at our first attempt.

This is the sequel of the account which I gave under the title "Hope Deferred?" Proverbs often express home truths in a terse and forcible way, but, thank goodness, they are not infallible. The heart may be wearied with waiting sometimes, but have cause to rejoice in the end, and this was certainly the case with us.

## Forthcoming Field Trials

**SECRETARIES OF FIELD TRIAL SOCIETIES ARE INVITED TO SEND US REPORTS OF THEIR TRIALS FOR PUBLICATION IN "THE SHOOTING TIMES." REPORTS SHOULD BE SENT DIRECT TO THE KENNEL EDITOR, MR. P. R. A. MOXON, HERNE COMMON, HERNE BAY, KENT.**

*Oct. 18 & 19:* English Springer Spaniel Club of Scotland. Roundfell, Southwick. Judges: Mr. R. Calder and Capt. J. D. MacPherson. Secretary: Mrs. C. A. Thomson, Over Linkins, Castle Douglas.

*Oct. 18 & 19:* Eastern Counties Retriever Society (Open Stake). Secretary: F. P. Busuttil, The Old Rectory, Swardeston, Norwich.

*Oct. 20:* Essex Field Trial Society (Retrievers). Novice Dog: Handlers Stake. Secretary: A. R. Heasman, St. Aubyns, Saffron Walden, Essex.

*Oct. 23 & 24:* Yellow Labrador Club (All-Aged Stake). Sudbourne Hall, Woodbridge, and Merton, near Thetford. Judges: Capt. W. S. Medlicott, Mr. J. Chudley and Mr. R. Macdonald. Secretary: Mrs. A. Wormald, Glenstuart, Cummertrees, Annan.

*Oct. 25:* Cambridgeshire Field Trial Society (Retriever Puppy and Non-Winners Stake). Kennet Hall, near Newmarket. Secretary: Mrs. M. J. Curtis, The Moors, Whittlesford, Cambs.

*Oct. 25 & 26:* West Midland Field Trial Society (Retrievers). Downton Castle, near Ludlow. Secretary: T. J. Greatorex, Corndean, Hodnet, Shropshire.


# 18 yr. old catches 5 good roach in a month!

WITHIN a month, fishing only at week-ends, 18-year-old D. G. Ralph of Colchester took five good roach from the Stour at Wormingford. Three were well over 1 lb., one was 1 lb. 11 oz., and the fifth was 2 lb. ! Mr. Ralph puts his consistent success down to his "amazing luck," and to having a line on which he could rely at all times. He was using a 2.5 B.S. 'Luron' 2.

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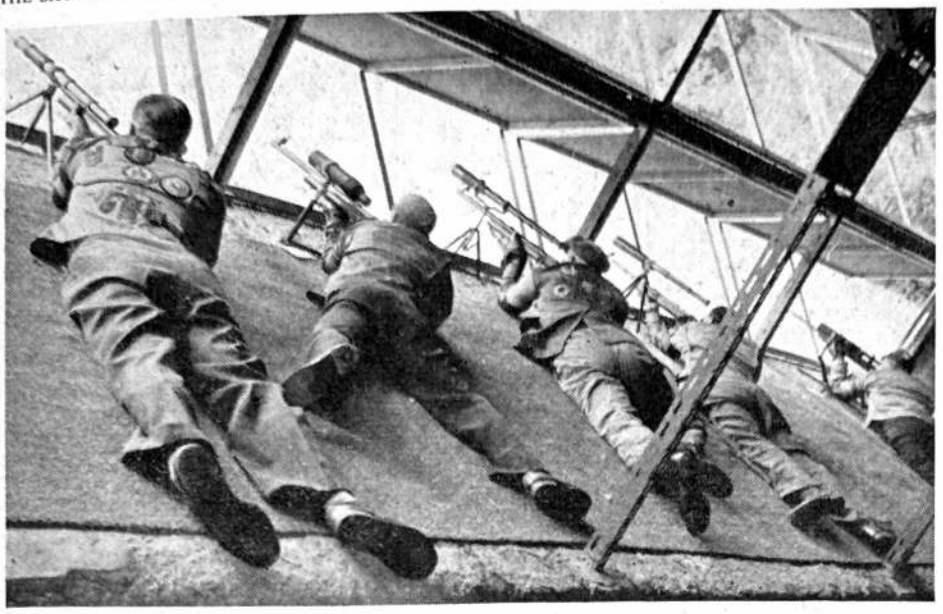

*Experts all, but none of these leg positions would suit an Army instructor.*

# Small-Bore Shooting

*by J. E. Beazley*

I HAD been firing a .303 S.M.L.E. Service rifle for years before I was introduced to the .22 match rifle.

Instinctively I adopted the firing position as laid down by my Sgt. Instructor. It was to me the only way to lie on the firing point, but soon I realised that I was alone in this respect. One day I looked along the firing point at the club that I had joined and could not find two people in the same position. The club coach just shrugged his shoulders and in answer to my question informed me that one fired this rifle in any position that one found comfortable. For years I had spread my legs wide apart and fought to keep the insides of my feet flat to the ground. Now I could please myself. Or could I? The wide spread legs had already proved a nuisance to the man on my left, and I had been reminded that at an open meeting there just would not be enough room for me to fire like that, so I closed the angle made by the legs and studied other positions.

**Uneven Keel**

Dr. J. A. A. Mekelburg was in my club. His record was something to be admired. His was the first International badge I had seen and the remainder of his badges proved that he must know how best to position himself on the firing point. A right-handed shot, I noticed his left leg was almost in line with his body while his right leg was fully bent at the knee. I tried it, I persevered with it, I rejected it. I personally cannot get really comfortable in this position. With the greatest respect to the "Doc," who has given me so much help and advice, I have noticed that the position he adopts is popular amongst the more corpulent of my shooting friends, and I can only assume that the position takes a certain amount of weight off the tummy. Perhaps in my later years I shall change to this style.

Another member of the same club never offended by taking up too much room, in fact his legs were almost directly in line with his body, and his ankles were neatly crossed. I tried this. It is a most comfortable position, but somehow I felt off balance, rather like a rowing boat that, having been pulled out of the water, has to settle down on one side or the other.

If ever I see a new position I make a point of trying it out on a practice card. I'll admit I am still a learner, but aren't we all?

**Conclusions Reached**

My conclusions to date are these:

1. Find a comfortable position for yourself that does not interfere with the man on your left or right, when firing point space is limited.

2. Whatever the position, *relax*. Twitchings of muscles have a nasty habit of transferring themselves to the front end of the man firing.

3. In unsquadded events select a position next to somebody who gives you enough room to take up the position in which you feel most comfortable.

In conclusion may I make a plea to uninitiated. "Don't get up off the firing point until the end of the detail." To some there is nothing more disturbing than to have the man next to you suddenly collect up his belongings, and move off. I find it particularly annoying when he tells me that he has just made another "poss." I never congratulate him.

**COUNTY RIFLE MEETINGS**

**County Rifle Association secretaries or captains wishing to have their Open or Confined Meetings reported in "The Shooting Times" are invited to contact the Editor at 29 Old Bond Street, London, W.1. Every effort will then be made to have a representative present.**

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# Wildfowling Clubs

*The Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland: Hon. Secretary, Brig. G. D. Holmes, Burnham Thorpe, Nr. King's Lynn, Norfolk.*

At the monthly meeting of the Great Yarmouth and District W.A. held at the Salisbury Arms, Cobholm, Sunday shooting was again the main item, but the secretary had not up to the moment received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of W.A.G.B.I. held at Birmingham on September 14 so could not make a report on it.

The treasurer's report was given by the secretary, and this showed a healthy balance; nearly all subscriptions were in and at the meeting four new members were enlisted.

Finally, a film show was given by Mr. John Moore, a member of the association, on the seals and terns of Scroby Sands in colour, a black and white of Yarmouth harbour during the fishing season, and a colour film of Whipsnade.

* * *

The fourth annual general meeting of the Fylde Wildfowlers' Association was held in the Palatine Hotel, Blackpool, on the evening of September 26, following the annual dinner which was attended by 94 members and guests including representatives of neighbouring clubs in Lancashire.

Much of the evening's business referred to the Association's sanctuary and wildfowl - raising project on Stanley Park Lake which enjoys the full support of the Blackpool County Borough Council.

There are approximately 340 mallard duck on the sanctuary in addition to a number of Canada, Chinese, pinkfooted and other varieties of geese and duck. The kind provision of a unique prototype fibreglass motor-boat by a patron of the Association has enabled members to patrol the lake efficiently and they have, in consequence, almost completely eliminated the widespread hooliganism which was rife before the Association took over. Needless to say, this has greatly enhanced the prestige of the wildfowler in the Fylde area. It is hoped that the nearby Marton Mere (a large expanse of water much used by almost every species of wildfowl) will soon come within our jurisdiction and be converted into a similar sanctuary.

The following officers were re-elected and elected: President: Sir Roland Robinson, M.A., LIB., M.P. Vice-presidents: Lt.-Col. W. E. Gill, O.B.E., T.D.; Mr. Arnold T. England, L.R.I.B.A.; Mr. S. Entwistle (gunsmith). Chairman: Mr. R. M. Lowe, M.P.S., M.B.O.U. Vice-chairman: Mr. T. N. Coltman. Hon. Secretary: Mr. B. P. Akhurst (345 Bispham Road, Bispham, Blackpool. Tel. North Shore 53335). Ass. Secretary: Mr. H. A. Squelch. Hon. Treasurer: Mr. J. Bryan. Hon. Veterinary Surgeon: Mr. G. H. Towse, B.Sc., M.R.C.V.S. (advisory).

On the social side, a full winter's programme has been arranged which includes lectures, films, clay pigeon shoots, in addition to our all-important wildfowl research, not to mention, of course, a spot of *wildfowling* in between!

* * *

A meeting of the Dorset Wildfowlers' Club was held on September 27 at the Red Lion Hotel, Hamworthy, Poole. The meeting was opened by the chairman, Mr. R. E. Bedingfield in the presence of about 40 members. In his opening remarks, the chairman reminded members of their responsibilities during the season now opened—to uphold the good name of the Club and to show courtesy to all other users of the harbour. He announced the lease to the Club of a private marsh and pond by Col. Scott of the Encombe Estates. A committee has been formed and rules made for the running of this marsh, similar to that of other well-known clubs.

Mr. J. M. Sanders of Wareham and Lt.-Col. T. C. Levingstone of Parkstone were elected new members and were welcomed to the meeting. After an interval, during which glasses were replenished, members were entertained by Arthur Conyers, gunsmiths of Blandford. Mr. Spearing, always a welcome member of the Club, gave an interesting talk on the latest developments in shotgun design, illustrated by the actual guns. These were a source of great interest to members and brought forth much and varied comment usual to wildfowlers. Question-time followed and brought out some real posers, which were, however, ably answered by the speaker. A vote of thanks was proposed to Mr. Spearing by the chairman, for his visit.

* * *

Otterhampton Wildfowlers' Club was inaugurated at a meeting in Otterhampton Parish Hall. Mr.

*(Continued on page 715, col. 3)*

# A Tale of Four Rifles

*by Geoffrey Moore*

IN certain of our overseas possessions, where they have security problems, it is an offence, carrying the death penalty, to be in possession of unauthorised firearms. And the law makes no distinction between, say, a Luger, and an inoffensive .22 match rifle.

I have often wondered how the police in one of these territories have solved the problem caused through my innocently-intended introduction, in the welter of regimental baggage, of our four cherished rifles, with which we had hoped to win the Army Small Bore Championship.

I had declared them, of course, when I had rememberd to a few weeks after arrival. But months later, I was still unable to find a policeman courageous enough to take the initiative and issue a licence. I only hope they have not shelved the matter until the rifles rust away.

How hard we had worked to get those rifles. Two were Mausers, fitted with adjustable peep-sights, and the others were B.S.A.s. The screws for the adjustment of elevation and lateral movement on the Mausers operated for the one in the same way as for the B.S.A.s and for the other in the opposite direction. It was almost impossible for some people to remember these variations, and what a menace it was. But it is a small rifle club indeed, that can exist on only two rifles. So we had to put up with it.

We had the Mausers first. They were cheap, and had to be, for the first reaction of a Regiment of Medium Artillery, armed with 5.5in. guns, was that the whole business of small-bore shooting smacked of the flippant. One way we raised money was by combing the nearest 30 yard range at the weekends, for lead, and then selling what we found for the club. After that the "Old Man" had felt sufficiently sorry for us to let us have the rest of the cost.

With these two rifles and the two B.S.A.s, cast off by a Territorial Regiment, we graduated from Lee-Enfields with open sights, for which some realist had provided 4in. targets. We began to use the normal five-bull targets.

About this time, Mr. Christie, former Scottish Captain, came on the scene. He cajoled and coached us, and above all coached me to coach. He admitted us into the Aberdeen League, with our "A" Team of five in Table 12 and our "B" in Table 14. And we began fortnightly postal shoots against opponents with exotic names like Auchindinny F. or Ballater Home Guard H. As the season progressed so did we, from scores of 85 or so to ones of over ninety. We became the Highland District champions. But our greatest triumph was in the Army Young Soldiers' Championship.

Most of our shots were National Servicemen, many of whom had fired in the Ashburton Shield in their school days. There was a certain amount of scoffing when we entered, but we came second all the same. By this time the team of ten was making an occasional 915-920. So we entered for the full Army Championship and won our first round match. It was quite a start for the first season, but as yet no one had scored a possible.

**Recognised and Privileged**

That summer we moved to Edinburgh, fortunately nearly all our shots remaining with us. Somehow we managed to start much from the point where we had left off. In the intervening period, and firing full-bore, we had been placed second in the Artillery Cup and had defeated all infantry teams in the Lowland District meeting. Regimentally the rifle club had now "arrived." We suddenly found ourselves to be privileged people; able to foregather for practice when we needed. We commandeered such equipment as O.P. telescopes for our exclusive use, and demanded the best lighting and got it. Naturally the shooting improved. We worried at such niceties as consistent clipping of the bull. We were after possibles, and then began to get them.

The Aberdeen league had kindly allowed us to stay with them, by post. We won both our tables. We pulled off the double by winning the Lowland District Championship (and heard that the infantry were being given extra rifle practice). Six of the team were averaging over 96 in match shooting, and were thereby eligible for the Army Individual Championship, which they all entered. But we all had one main goal in sight, the Army Small-Bore Championship.

The team was now capable of 955, and I wonder what we could have done with spanking new B.S.A.s. Our two faithfuls were bearing the brunt, but everyone needs a slightly different adjustment on his sights. It does not help to have five of a team using the same weapon. However we were allowed to buy the best of ammunition. That army stuff is terrible for hang-fires.

The time came for the first round. We shot this by post and won it, and then the second and won again. The team was shooting well and consistently. They were all dead keen. Then the blow fell. The Regiment was ordered overseas and to sail at short notice. There was no kind-hearted Mr. Christie to let us fire off the remaining matches as quickly as we could. Members of the team began to get their posting orders, and the regimental baggage had to be packed. Into their special steel cabinet we sadly packed our rifles, consoled with Mr. Christie's promise that wherever we were in the world, we could still belong to the Aberdeen league.

Do they boast up there that they once had a team in the line in Korea?

Then I, too, was posted away, and I have often wondered.

☆ ☆ ☆

# GUN GOSSIP

*by North Country*

SHOOTING men generally and especially those who are keen on .22 rifles will find plenty to interest them in the latest catalogue (120 pages) issued by Alfred J. Parker, of Bath Street Old Schools, Birmingham 4. Its price is 3s. 6d. or 4s. by post. It is in my opinion well worth its money. For, as I have said before (about this and other comparable publications) it is far more than just a price list. It is almost a work of reference, and far more exciting with its numerous illustrations, etc.

Mr. Parker can truly be said to have had a lifetime's experience of rifles. For his contact with rifles began in 1894 when, as a boy, he was taken to Bisley by his father. He has attended every Bisley meeting to date, chiefly as an armourer and rifle shot, but since 1919 as proprietor of the family firm. It seems appropriate, therefore, that the catalogue should commence with an article by him entitled "Target shooting with the .303." Here full-range marksmen will find much to interest them. Yet in the *Foreword* this modest claim is made: "To the rifleshot who shoots at Bisley every week, many of the comments put down may appear commonplace, but to those who are confined mostly to the provincial ranges and to overseas marksmen there may be found much of interest in the pages."

Naturally armourers' tools, materials and accessories occupy a fair space in this publication, each article being illustrated and fully described. I am glad to see that plenty of space has been devoted to rifle cleaning. A large range of both .303 and .22 bristle and wire brushes is shown including phosphor bronze scourers, nylon brushes, etc. Notes on cleaning are included and that important bit of advice about a plug of flannelette is added; which says: "*Never, never* keep a plug of flannelette or rag in the muzzle or chamber. It will cause rust and pitting and is very dangerous if forgotten before shooting. We have seen many barrels deeply pitted at the muzzle through this cause and some lucky and unlucky bursts. Clean your rifle or gun barrels as soon as possible after shooting and repeat in two or three days. Wipe out oil before shooting." This advice is as sound as ever and it should be carefully heeded (and acted upon) by the rising generation. And while we are on this subject I will say that I was never very keen or too sure about the use of barrel rods in shot guns. At one time I used them (they were rather the fashion then). But eventually I came to the conclusion that they did no good and might in fact help rust to form. I therefore discarded them altogether and left a film of oil or grease in the bore.

There is, of course, a good deal of space given to .22 rifles—the .22 Hornet and .222 Rem., .22 repeaters, automatics, magazines, and single-shot rifles. Also to the subject of telescopic sights. Useful information too is the table of .22 ballistics, from the High Velocity cartridge giving a muzzle velocity of 1,375 f.p.s. to the .22 Short with its 30 grs. bullet and velocity of 950 f.p.s. At 75 yards the respective velocities the 1,130 and 820. Pages on proof and shot-gun cleaning follow. Here it is said: "It is surprising how many shot guns are ruined by neglect to clean. As gunsmiths we have more barrels through our hands ruined by pitting and rust than for any other reason. Unfortunately many of these are good high-class guns and there is no alternative but costly new barrels."

I have a letter from a reader of Clydach near Swansea in which he says: "I would like your views on the 1oz. of No. 5 shot fired from a d.b. full choke 30in. barrels." This means a bit of repetition on my part, as I have recently referred to a similar matter. However, there are always fresh points and angles to every question; and, too, former experiences can be drawn upon. This load from a full choke can be a wonderful killer. At the same time, seeing that recoil will be slightly reduced, it is helpful in cases where a large number of cartridges is fired in the course of a single day. I have killed some very high pigeon with this combination and far-out ground game. For pigeon, however, I think I prefer No. 6, which patterns well and has enough penetration in reserve. There are 270 pellets in the load as against 220 of No. 5.

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# The Young Shot

## Pot-Pourri

***by Petrel***

ONE of my pet aversions is the man who knows better than the dog. You know the type well, and it applies as much to amateur handlers as to guns who have no retriever of their own in attendance. They mark the bird's fall, put the dog on to it, and as soon as it searches in what seems to be the wrong direction, they "peep" their whistles or argue that the hound is not trying or going the wrong way. They forget that a dog has a much more highly developed nose than their own proboscis, and they are apparently unaware that where a bird falls (unless it is obviously stone dead) is no indication of where it will finally be found. Unless it has no nose at all and is completely uncontrollable or at variance with its handler, give the dog a chance is a fair and common-sense maxim.

There are many dog owners who fail to credit their charges with the intelligence that they possess. At the same time, there is sometimes a temptation to give a dog more than his due in this respect.

In the latter category, two examples spring to mind, one recent, one more distant.

**Water Divining?**

On one of those fine warm days that heralded this October, I spent the afternoon in a ditch waiting for pigeon. For a change there had been no rain for a week and the ditch was fairly dry, though the ground was by no means hard and it was obvious that there was moisture not far beneath the surface. The afternoon was almost hot, and the close confines of the hide made waiting a stuffy, thirsty business.

The hound, lying full length in the ditch-bottom was obviously feeling the heat, and suddenly he began to scrabble away at the earth with his forepaws. In no time at all he had scratched out a small hole and this filled with water that welled up from the subsoil. From this the dog took a long draft, and his thirst quenched, settled down again to patient inactivity. By a coincidence I had been reading on the previous day, a book about the natives of the Kalahari Desert who, like many desert races, are possessed of the ability to "smell" water, and who, having sniffed out a suitable spot, thrust into the earth a hollow cane through which they suck up the moisture.

Clever dog, was my first reaction; employing a similar principle. Or was the truth of it that he was merely bored, started digging, and on discovering the water, lapped at it from force of habit?

This action is more likely to have been premeditated than the other example which occurred some years ago, and also involved a labrador.

We were shooting over a derelict Army camp in the north, and one of the guns fired at a rabbit which disappeared round the corner of a building. He claimed to have hit the animal, so when we rounded the corner to find no trace of it, the dog was laid on. It followed the line along the edge of a drainage ditch, and marked to ground at the end of a culvert through which flowed some two or three inches of water. Without more ado the dog started to dig at the mouth of the pipe until a small bank of earth was built up almost across the stream. As a result of this damming operation the water level inside the pipe gradually mounted, and within seconds a very wet and bedraggled rabbit bolted, straight into the jaws of the waiting dog.

While I am more than sceptical that the dog had reasoned out its action and expected this to happen, I like to pretend that it had.

**Making a Plan**

Mention of thinking ahead reminds me how important to a day's shooting of any sort, is a plan of campaign. On the big shoot every move is worked out in advance down to the last detail, but many of us miss making the best of our opportunities on the casual walk-round because we treat it too casually and fail to give it enough thought in advance. I agree, too much organisation and precision quickly palls, and much of the enjoyment of a day's rough shooting alone or with one or two friends, depends upon not being bound too strictly by a schedule or formalities. But there are limits, and it is as well to remember simple principles.

Failure to do so last week-end meant that instead of hanging up at least four pheasants in the larder, plus a couple of snipe, a brace of partridges and a hare, I had to be content with a single pheasant and the hare. Certainly, I was content enough with these, but the thought of what might—and indeed should—have been, still rankles. I failed on the pheasants by presuming too much; and hurrying straight to where I thought they would be without bothering about a rough meadow on the downwind boundary. Needless to say there were fifteen birds there and away they went out of shot on the wind. Where I counted on finding them I drew a blank.

I made a nonsense of the snipe by walking their field the wrong way, forgetting the cattle that suddenly loomed in the background and prevented safe shooting. The partridges I watched go down on a stubble and having walked the field saw them get up right under the hedge where I reckoned they would not be. For the moment I had forgotten how far and how quickly they can run.

It is always worthwhile delaying any manoeuvre until all the possibilities have been considered. Take, for instance, the gun in the photograph on this page and notice his give-away shadow on the water. An approach on the other side of the pond, or higher up the right-hand bank, to turn and come swiftly and straight on to the pool would have been a much better move.

**Gun Cleaning**

I have not yet visited the coast this season, so there is no question of my gun having been exposed to salt air or water. Nor have I been shooting in the rain, and anyway I am careful to clean the gun most thoroughly after each outing. It was with no little concern, therefore, that I took it from its case in a dry corner to see a spot or two of rust growing like fungus in the choke barrel. I managed to remove these blemishes without delay, but must watch those places carefully in future.

I do not like to blame modern powders for corrosion. Perhaps I had not been so thorough in my cleaning as I thought. But there is no doubt at all that present-day powders make much more mess in a barrel than the old favourites, and the deposit, particularly the leading requires some shifting.

Some time ago I was taken to task for recommending the use of bronze wire brushes for normal gun cleaning, but with the support of prominent gun makers at my back I repeat that wire brushes plus elbow grease are the best materials for shifting leading and harmless to the bore. If the leading still remains stubborn, dip the wire brush in methylated spirits (NOT *on any account paraffin*).

This will move the streaks and keep the brush clean at the same time.

**No Mudlark**

There is no such animal as the typical wildfowler. That is to say, at least, that you cannot recognise a fowler by his appearance. The popular conception that a wildfowler is always a giant of a man clad in blue jersey and patched sea boots carrying a gun of enormous dimensions, is so much phonus bolonus. The most insignificant looking character may be a knowledgeable and expert gunner, and the less he says, the more he may have to say. It never does to sum up a man's capabilities on the strength of one or two momentary meetings far from the tideline, and I had hopes that a recent seeker after fowling information would turn out to be made of the right stuff.

Alas, those hopes were shattered when he telephoned to report on his first visit to an estuary that I had recommended.

"How did you get on?" I asked.

"I didn't," he said, "I couldn't get anywhere near those places you mentioned. It was all mud."

Somehow I do not think he has much flair for fowling. And yet judging by appearances you would never have guessed.

# Gundog News

*Conducted by P. R. A. MOXON, Herne Common, Herne Bay, Kent*

THE old controversy about a retriever "getting out into the country" cropped up recently in two conversations with gundog men. The first man with whom I discussed the question was a shooting man, pure and simple, and one who not only gets a great deal of shooting upon his own ground, but who gets around as guest to lots of good shoots and is always invited to bring his dog. In his view, the good shooting dog should not be encouraged to get too far out, although it must be capable of being handled to a certain extent.

"If you allow your retriever to range too far out," he said, "particularly in a root field or in other similar cover, lots of birds are going to be put up and off the ground without being shot at. Surely it is far better to have a dog which will work its ground properly within, say, sixty yards of you, or even less, than one which does not even begin to start looking for birds until it is almost that distance from you. I have seen many field trial dogs which were simply hopeless when called upon to seek birds which had fallen within twenty or thirty yards of the gun, but put them out for a towered bird at eighty yards and they did the job magnificently. I would be very unpopular on my own ground, and nor would I receive the invitations that I do, if my dog was like this. The distant birds are the job for the pickers up and keepers, and can be collected later or, if the ground on which they fell is to be walked up, they can be searched for when that area is reached. I cannot see that anyone but a trial merchant can possibly want one of these 'long distance' dogs."

Here, then, we have the views of one very experienced shot, and a man for whose knowledge of shooting and gundogs I have the greatest respect. I have heard similar views expressed by dozens of shooting men, and most of them do, I think, genuinely hold such views. One or two, maybe, are somewhat jealous of the man who can get his dog out a long way, and in their case their opinions may be just a question of "sour grapes." However, let us consider the views of the second man with whom I talked about this. He is also an experienced shot and gundog man, and does a great deal of fowling. He has from time to time run his dog in trials, with quite a lot of success, and this same dog he has used for everyday shooting.

**The Getter-Outer**

"My dog must be a 'getter-out,'" he explained. "Otherwise, I am up a gum tree, both at trials and when duck shooting. In the latter case, if a duck glides down on the far side of a river, my dog has to cross over and get well out on the far side in order to retrieve it. A close working retriever which will not do this is useless to me. At most retriever trials, as we all know, a retriever is often called upon to make long blind retrieves, and unless it can be got out and handled it probably does not stand a chance in the big open stakes. For ordinary game shooting I still believe that the dog which can be got out a long way is useful, and in practice it does not disturb nearly as much ground or put up as many birds as most people seem to think.

"If a bird comes down at a great distance and is obviously a runner, surely it is better to have a dog sent at once and stand a chance of collecting it than to worry unduly about disturbing ground. A bird in hand is worth two in the bush, and I want every head of game I shoot to actually go in the bag. After all, at most shoots there are wild dogs which disturb ground anyway—the runners-in and chasers, and those not under proper control. This talk about disturbing ground and putting up birds is grossly exaggerated, in my view."

There is a lot to be said for both views, of course, and I have always been a believer in a man training his dog for the particular type or types of work which he requires. It is perfectly true that lots of these long-distance retrievers do not concentrate in looking for stuff close in. Indeed, I have known dogs with whom it was necessary to retreat about forty yards before putting them on to a bird which had fallen close to the gun, otherwise they just would not persevere, but keep trying to pull out and look for something at sixty or seventy yards.

The good dog, and the ideal shooting-trial dog is one which will search wherever indicated, no matter whether this be ten yards or a hundred from the gun. Unfortunately, we see few dogs capable of this. Most trial men concentrate on getting their dogs well out and making them "handy" at a distance, and they are liable to so overdo this that close work is almost ignored. I have done this myself and know how easy it is to fall into this error.

**Specialised Field Trialers**

It has been said that the true trial dog is a shooting dog more highly trained and "polished," and that if you cannot shoot over a field trialer in the ordinary way, then it is a fraud. This is all very well, but nowadays trials are so highly contested and specialised that many very worthy shooting dogs would not stand an earthly and, by the same token, quite a lot of field trial dogs would be found unsatisfactory for the average shooting man. For all this, I have been present at trials when the obvious "shooting dog" has scored heavily over its trial-only rivals, because it found "easy" birds upon which they failed.

Some years ago I attended a trial in Cambridge where a partridge had fallen about thirty yards out, with just sufficient life left in it to tuck itself into the combine straw before expiring. This bird was marked accurately by two judges, the gun, and both handlers down with their dogs at the time. Yet no less than nine dogs were tried upon it, and the first eight went well out past it and, despite handling, whistling and calling, not one even looked like getting it. The ninth dog to be called in was much slower and less stylish than the others, but it went out from its handler using its nose every inch of the way, and found the bird in a matter of seconds.

**Eye-Wiping and the Winner**

This must have been quite half an hour after the bird was shot and the ground was fouled by the scent of all the other dogs which had been round the bird. The dog in question won the stake, for although it may not have proved so brilliant in other directions, it wiped the eyes of all the dogs which were high in the judges' estimation up to that time, and wiped them on a "simple" bird at that.

I know this dog and its handler quite well, and the dog is a good shooting dog and was owner-trained from a puppy. It did not get a great deal of work—perhaps once a week during the season, with an occasional trial thrown in, but it did prove that an ordinary shooting dog can, at times, wipe the eyes of much more highly trained and specialised competitors, and prove that, after all, nose counts for a lot, even at a trial. Other things being equal, the trial dog which is fast and stylish will beat its opponents, but without a nose (and this, in many cases, is only a question of experience) the fastest and most stylish dog will not be highly regarded by judges.

Luck, as we all know to our cost, plays a very great part in field trials but, as I have written so many times, if a dog *is* good and is run often enough, it will come to the top in the end. Unfortunately, for many of us, trials are too expensive a pastime for dogs to be run

*The average shooting man prefers a steady, close-working retriever.*

very often, and consequently a lot of potential winners which really are worth something never receive the recognition they deserve. In some cases the owner becomes disheartened and gives up running a really good dog, simply because he has not got confidence in it once it has been beaten a time or two.

Other men are too impatient, and despite ample finances to allow them to compete, they give up too easily either because they are bad losers or through sheer discouragement. My advice, to any man who has a good dog and has the financial means to go on running it, is to peg away until it does win, always providing that he *is* confident in the dog and is capable of handling it.

However, getting back to the real requirements of a retriever, I have found consistently that "the average shooting man," when sending a dog for training, tells me that he wants a reliable and solid gamefinder which he can handle and which *does not get too far away from him.* In the first place he wants a dog which will not let him down in public, and not only does he feel that he is more capable of handling a close-ranging dog, but he believes that he will be unpopular with the other guns if he does have a dog which covers a lot of ground. After all, what does happen at the average organised game shoot? The easier birds are attended to by the guns which have dogs, but the distant and difficult ones are left to the keepers and pickers up, either by reason of time or because they fell on ground which must not be disturbed.

**Overlooking Close Game**

So we see that the requirements of the shooter and the field trial man differ in some respects. The better field trial dogs are capable of finding close-in birds as well as distant ones, even though at many open retriever stakes you will find judges ignoring birds which fall close in, or giving them to another judge to try a dog which has not seen them fall and which will have to be sent from a greater distance. Retriever judging today deliberately encourages competitors to train their dogs for distant and difficult birds, with the result that, in many cases, the dogs overlook close stuff. This is especially true of trial dogs in the hands of men who are unable to give them a lot of work and experience. This, unfortunately, is the case with a lot of field trial enthusiasts who lack the finances or facilities for giving their dogs a lot of practical work, although they are as keen as mustard.

The duck shooter and wildfowler certainly require dogs which will go great distances and retrieve birds, especially over rivers and streams which cannot be conveniently crossed. A dog which will not go to the far bank and cast out will lose you a lot of duck, but, on the other hand, the duck specialist probably does not worry if his dog disturbs ground and spends a long time in getting its quarry. Wildfowling is a very personal and specialised affair, usually conducted alone or with only one companion, and can be taken as a separate case. For all this, however, I feel that a good retriever should be capable of being handled at quite a distance, for even on ordinary driven-shooting days there are often circumstances where a long-distance dog is called for, even by the guns themselves.

This all takes time and trouble, and unless a man can afford to spend a lot of time training his dog, or a lot of money having it trained, it is better dispensed with. The main thing is for the shooting man to have a reliable dog for normal work, and certainly some of the fantastically long retrieves seen at trials cannot be considered "normal" work. There are several factors responsible for the present-day emphasis on long retrieves at trials. In the first place the general standard is so high that judges look for any excuse for discarding a dog, and try to make things as difficult as possible to this end.

Secondly, the American market, where long retrieves and handling are a *sine qua non,* has played a very large part in shaping our recent retriever field trials. As in so many sports, the commercial aspect tends to get the upper hand, and though we have more amateur and novice handlers than ever today, they are being forced to fall into line with the professionals and "semi-professionals," of which there are an increasing number. A great number of "amateurs" get a lot more work and shooting for their dogs than many professionals and small shooters, and very good luck to them.

I really do not see what can be done about it, except that in many cases the "small" man would be better advised to stick to and concentrate upon one good dog than to try to handle and give experience to three or four (through sheer enthusiasm), with the result that none of them get anywhere and cannot compete with the big names.

I would like to correct an error which occurred in Gundog News of September 14. The name of the dog which won the Bellyfrema Trophy was incorrectly given as "Altmor Meg," whereas it should have been "Thanet Belle." My apologies to Mr. William Meldrum, the owner of this winning bitch.

* * *

The South Eastern Gundog Society will hold a competitive training class of the South E. on Sunday, October 21, at Cottage Farm, Betchworth. Meet at the Betchworth Village Hall at 9.30 a.m. Please bring picnic lunches and teas.

Recent successes by members in field trials: Mrs. Hendley with Samdor Nimble Nick 2nd, and Mrs. Hutton with Wander of Yarlaw C. of M. in the A.V. Retriever, Non-Winners Stake, Golden Retriever Trials at Haddington. C. of M.s were also won by Mrs. Hendley and Mrs. Woodbridge in the All-Aged Stakes. Samdor also received a special for the best marker in both stakes. Mr. Lee with Crusader of Colchis, C. of M. in the Kennel Club Non-Winners Stake.

# Clay Pigeon Shooting

## Fixture List

*Oct. 20:* Bedford G.C. Open Cash Skeet Shoot. 11 a.m.

*Oct. 20:* Hayfield G.C., near Stockport. Wappenshaw Meeting (members only).

*Oct. 27:* Bowland & District G.C., Sawley, Clitheroe, Lancs. Members' Shoot.

*Oct. 28:* Beverley & District G.C. 1.30 p.m. Members' Cup Shoot.

*Nov. 4:* Harrogate G.C., Yorks. Members' Shoot, 1.45 p.m.

* * *

## Reports and Results

**Beverley and District Gun Club.** A special shoot was held on Sunday, September 30, in aid of the Olympic Games Appeal Fund, for which prizes had been graciously donated by local personalities and firms.

The support given was more than gratifying. Some 40 guns took part in the various events staged, which were run on a class handicap basis. As a result of this shoot we have been able to send a cheque for £52 10s. to the Olympic Appeal Fund, through the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association.

As the finals of the Olympic Trial at Bisley proved the two-man team both to be Yorkshiremen, we felt that we, as a Yorkshire Club, should make a special effort to give every possible support to the fund, and we feel that these efforts have been truly worthwhile. We would, however, express here our gratitude, together with a heartfelt "thank you" to all those who contributed to the prize list, to the shooters who gave their support for this special event in a really sporting manner, and to those who helped in any way, however small, to ensure the smooth running of the programme.

Results were as follows: 10 Bird D/Line A Class: 1, T. A. Watson; 2, R. Townroe. B Class: 1, D. Watson; 2, M. Raynor. 25 Bird D/Line and 20 Skeet combined, A Class: 1, R. Wilkinson; 2, P. Taylor; 3, H. B. Smith. B Class: 1, J. Clark; 2, M. Raynor; 3, J. Webster. 25 Bird D/Line, A Class: 1, P. Taylor; 2, R. Wilkinson. B Class: 1, H. Wroot; 2, E. Grantham. 20 Birds Skeet, A Class: 1, R. Wilkinson; 2, R. Townroe (Mr. Townroe, incidentally, also succeeded in putting up his 25 straight down the line at this meeting). B Class: 1, M. Raynor; 2, J. Webster. Five Bird non-winners event, B Class: 1, R. Walker. C Class: 1, C. Pelham. High Gun, A Class: P. Taylor. B Class: H. Wroot. The prizes were presented by Mrs. R. Townroe, and after a vote of thanks had been given by the hon. sec. the meeting was brought to a close.

* * *

## SKEET LEAGUE—1956

Match results, scores, and league table after 10 matches:

**Match No. 8**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bedford | 91 | Blandford "A" | 83 |
| Blackpool | 76 | London | 73 |
| Childrey | 90 | Waltham Abbey "B" | 84 |
| Grange | 91 | Hayfield | 87 |
| Harrogate | 77 | Blandford "B" | 68 |
| North Wales | 85 | Eastbourne | 69 |
| Waltham Abbey "A" | 93 | Birmingham | 90 |
| Wetherby | 81 | West Sussex | 74 |
| Wormshill & L. | 79 | Beverley | 72 |

**Match No. 9**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Birmingham | 83 | Blackpool | 76 |
| Blandford "B" | 80 | Bedford | 77 |
| Childrey | 87 | Beverley | 80 |
| Grange | 81 | West Sussex | 75 |
| Hayfield | 92 | Eastbourne | 74 |
| North Wales | 86 | London | 78 |
| Waltham Abbey "A" | 90 | Harrogate | 77 |
| Waltham Abbey "B" | 89 | Blandford "A" | 86 |
| Wormshill & L. | 79 | Wetherby | 78 |

**Match No. 10**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blandford "A" | 82 | Blandford "B" | 78 |
| Childrey | 88 | Wetherby | 74 |
| Eastbourne | 70 | West Sussex | 64 |
| Grange | 85 | Wormshill & L. | 79 |
| Harrogate | 80 | Blackpool | 77 |
| Hayfield | 95 | London | 77 |
| North Wales | 89 | Birmingham | 87 |
| Waltham Abbey "A" | 90 | Bedford | 81 |
| Waltham Abbey "B" | 85 | Beverley | 57 |

| | Matches shot | W | D | L | Kills For | Against | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hayfield | 10 | 9 | – | 1 | 923 | 763 | 18 |
| North Wales | 10 | 9 | – | 1 | 859 | 791 | 18 |
| Waltham Abbey "A" | 10 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 870 | 793 | 17 |
| Grange | 10 | 8 | – | 2 | 842 | 797 | 16 |
| Bedford | 10 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 843 | 796 | 15 |
| Childrey | 10 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 846 | 808 | 15 |
| Blandford "A" | 10 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 827 | 790 | 13 |
| Birmingham | 10 | 5 | – | 5 | 845 | 811 | 10 |
| Waltham Abbey "B" | 10 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 794 | 792 | 10 |
| Wormshill & Lynsted | 10 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 786 | 803 | 9 |
| Blackpool | 10 | 4 | – | 6 | 776 | 784 | 8 |
| Blandford "B" | 10 | 4 | – | 6 | 776 | 793 | 8 |
| Eastbourne | 10 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 722 | 810 | 7 |
| Harrogate | 10 | 3 | – | 7 | 760 | 809 | 6 |
| Wetherby | 10 | 2 | – | 8 | 753 | 825 | 4 |
| London | 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 765 | 841 | 3 |
| West Sussex | 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 709 | 788 | 3 |
| Beverley | 10 | – | – | 10 | 733 | 835 | 0 |

## C.P.S.A. OLYMPIC SELECTION SHOOT, SEPTEMBER 8 & 9

DETAILS OF SCORES

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

| | ST 1 | ST 2 | ST 3 | ST 4 | EX 100 | ST 5 | ST 6 | ST 7 | ST 8 | EX 100 | EX 200 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Booth, C. R. | 21 | 24 | 20 | 24 | 89 | 22 | 21 | 19 | 24 | 86 | 175 |
| Fear, E. | 23 | 24 | 21 | 23 | 91 | 24 | 24 | 22 | 22 | 92 | 183 |
| Horlock, E. | 21 | 23 | 22 | 17 | 83 | 21 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 92 | 175 |
| Jones, W. T. | 23 | 24 | 22 | 23 | 92 | 19 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 87 | 179 |
| Poskitt, A. | 22 | 23 | 20 | 22 | 87 | 18 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 84 | 171 |
| Wheater, J. | 25 | 25 | 22 | 24 | 96 | 23 | 21 | 23 | 24 | 91 | 187 |

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

| | ST 9 | ST 10 | ST 11 | ST 12 | EX 100 | EX 300 | ST 13 | ST 14 | ST 15 | ST 16 | EX 100 | EX 400 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Booth, C. R. | 22 | 21 | 21 | 23 | 87 | 262 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 21 | 89 | 351 |
| Fear, E. | 24 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 91 | 274 | 24 | 20 | 24 | 21 | 89 | 363 |
| Horlock, E. | 19 | 24 | 21 | 25 | 89 | 264 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 91 | 355 |
| Jones, W. T. | 19 | 20 | 20 | 17 | 76 | 255 | 22 | 20 | 24 | 21 | 87 | 342 |
| Poskitt, A. | 23 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 86 | 257 | 22 | 18 | 20 | 20 | 80 | 337 |
| Wheater, J. | 22 | 24 | 25 | 22 | 93 | 280 | 25 | 22 | 25 | 24 | 96 | 376 |

1, J. Wheater 376, 2, E. Fear 363 (Olympic competitors), 3, E. Horlock 355 (Reserve), 4, C. R. Booth 351, 5, W. T. Jones 342, 6, A. Poskitt 337.

# Fisherman's Diary

AT least one association of fly-fishermen in this country works on the principle of stocking its waters every season with hatchery-bred trout well above the minimum takeable size. Without charging extravagant fees it can follow this policy and provide almost certain catches for its members. In this particular case everyone seems to be satisfied, but any suggestion that the policy should become a general one needs careful study.

Every year I receive from the United States a collection of pamphlets, official "handouts," orders, regulations, etc., concerning fishing and shooting. This always includes a list of the open seasons for various species of fish in each of the states. Many of the more expansive western states boldly say against all species "No close season"—though South Dakota is a little cagey and declares the open season to be from March to February 28.

In the thickly populated eastern states it is a very different story, and I often wondered, as I glanced at the trout season dates, why anglers were given so short a fishing period.

Pennsylvania decided this year to extend the open season to September 15 and the reason for this extra six weeks explains the normally short seasons. As part of its ordinary stocking policy the state released in its water about 3 million trout of *legally takeable size.* In Pennsylvania and other states with the same stocking policy, so many anglers take out licences to fish for the season's releases that most of the introduced stock is caught (or "harvested," to use the official local term) in 12-14 weeks.

This year Pennsylvania's weather must have been something like ours. Heavy rain kept many anglers from the waterside and presented those who did reach the banks with a view of swollen, muddy torrents. As a result, the number of trout caught up to July 31 was negligible. These hatchery-bred trout cannot survive the winter, so they were a dead loss. Licence fees for an extra six weeks helped to reduce the red-ink figures. Stocking with hatchery fish of large size creates an unnatural situation, but where anglers are prepared to pay well if they can be guaranteed fish as well as fishing, the policy is likely to continue.

### Sharks Galore

A short time ago I mentioned Mrs. Hetty Eathorne, the captor of many blue sharks, a record mako and—the subject of comment—a 74ft. conger. I thought it would not be long before I should have occasion to mention another lady whose angling exploits in Cornish waters are renowned.

The name of Mrs. Daphne Case occurred regularly in the lists of specimen saltwater fish published by *The Angler's News,* and she, too, specialises in big-game fishing. In the 1955 season, for example, Mrs. Case had more than a dozen blue sharks of over 75lb. to her credit, the largest weighing 119lb. I imagine that both ladies enjoy their fishing and regard rivalry and records as secondary considerations—and it might in any event need the judgment of a Cornish Paris to award any palms that are being offered.

Earlier this month Mrs. Case established a new record. Fishing off Looe in the "Silver Spray," a boat captained by Mr. Edgar Williams, she caught 30 blue sharks, the largest single-handed catch made in British waters. Their total weight was over 1,500lb. and the heaviest individual fish weighed 90lb. Those who dislike the sea in any but its more placid moods may consider that a secondary record was established. Owing to rough weather "Silver Spray" was the only shark boat out that day.

### Fleet Pond

The pike season can really be said to have started this month whatever laws and by-laws have to say on the subject. From now until mid-March these fish offer interesting angling with lure or bait.

London anglers looking for good pike fishing within reasonable distance might be well advised to give Fleet Pond a trial. I have not fished there for many years, but I understand that three 20-pounders have already been caught this season. The fishing rights are held by the Aldershot District Fishing Association, and a season ticket costs 15s.—little enough to pay for several months' pike and general coarse fishing.

Tickets can be obtained on application (with stamped addressed envelope) to Colonel W. T. Sargeaunt, The Bollans, Ashley Road, Farnborough, Hants.

### Spreading Barbel

Barbel are rather fussy fish that know what they want and die or move elsewhere if they don't get it. Their main demand is a fairly large river of relatively pure water containing deep pools and fast runs. Given these conditions they may, if introduced into a river, stay roughly where they are put or move into the next county but one.

Something like that happened with a batch of barbel transferred from the Thames to the upper waters of the Dorset Stour about fifty years ago. The bulk of the fish moved down river and settled in the lower reaches of the Stour and Avon, where their descendents now provide the best barbel fishing the country has to offer.

It is unfortunate that barbel should not be more widely distributed, for only a small proportion of England's coarse-fish anglers have an opportunity to fish for them. Barbel of from 8 to 10lb. are not uncommon, and outsize specimens reach as much as 15 or 16lb. Add to this the fact that they are furious fighters possessing great strength and endurance and you have a fish that is well worth some trouble.

The Thames and Kennet are and always have been good barbel rivers. The Trent was excellent until pollution killed most of the stocks, but efforts to re-establish them in that river have recently been made. A good head of barbel resides in the rivers of the Yorkshire Plain, and, as has been said, in the Hampshire Avon and Dorset Stour.

Last month the Severn River Board secured about 500 barbel ranging from 2 to 8lb. in weight taken from the River Kennet. These were released at eight points on the Severn, where it is hoped they will establish themselves firmly. The Severn should suit them, and a heavy stocking such as this, with mature fish, should give them every chance of survival and increase.

Anglers who catch any of these fish are naturally expected to return them to the water, but it is a pleasing thought that the western half of England will in a few years' time (with some luck) have its own barbel river.

### Soviet Shrinkage

I have commented more than once on the lack of water in some British lakes and reservoirs this year. Russian water experts have a bigger headache, for they are examining the causes of a drop of 10ft. in the level of the Caspian Sea.

CORIDON.

## WILDFOWLING CLUBS

*(Continued from page 709)*

Jack Warren presided and the meeting was addressed by Mr. B. A. Wheatley, hon. secretary of The Bridgwater Bay Wildfowlers' Club, supported by Messrs. J. Brewer and H. Shepherd, members of the Committee.

Mr. Wheatley outlined the policy of the Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, their parent Association, and its wildfowl rearing, ringing, and conservation schemes. He said the real sportsman must be prepared to put before he took, and that wildfowlers were co-operating with the Wildfowl Trust on the basis of "More wildfowl for All."

If the protectionists would take a rational view of things and appreciate that there was room for all interests to work together, wildfowlers and bird-watchers alike.

The meeting unanimously agreed to inaugurate the Otterhampton Wildfowlers' Club, to seek affiliation with W.A.G.B.I., and to co-operate closely with other neighbouring bodies who were pledged to protect and improve wildfowling.

Twelve members were enrolled. Shift-work and the fair affected attendance. The hon. secretary, Mr. H. G. Dunn (59 Woodbury Road, Bridgwater) would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in joining the new club, and the hon. treasurer, Mr. P. R. Ford of Steart, will be equally pleased to receive the 10s. subscription.

The chairman thanked the B.B.W.A. for their help in starting the new club. He hoped that all the enthusiasts in the parish, including the younger ones, would support them, as by so doing they would get the backing of the most powerful and influential sporting organisation in the British Isles, whose knowledge, experience, and legal advice had already done much towards fostering a spirit of co-operation and co-existence, and who had successfully opposed unfair and unnecessary restrictions.

* * *

The Adur Valley W.A. is holding a pigeon shoot in the Henfield area on Saturday, October 20, starting at 10.30 a.m. and finishing at 6 p.m., R. V. Tudor House, High Street, Henfield.

* * *

At the recent clay pigeon meeting of the Leigh Gun and Wildfowling Association, Mr. Jack Grisley retained the championship for the second year running; Mr. John Hill was second, and Mr. R. Pearmain third.

At the club's annual general meeting plaques and cartridges were presented to the successful contestants, and plans were made to institute a duck-rearing scheme, organised pigeon shoots, and to stop illegal use of .22s by trespassers on the Club's fowling grounds.

## Infirmity of Purpose

*(Continued from page 702)*

I was still watching, spellbound, when the surface of the water was rudely broken to reveal a human head with long wet hair trailing into the water . . . Even as my brain registered the fact that my dream of a monster trout was shattered, I knew why it was that the *seter* had been empty, and what had caused the ripples seen by Gunnar. Elna was taking her evening bath!

Fascinated. I watched her swim to the bank and, after a brief struggle, regain *terra firma* . . . I held my breath in wonder as she stood up to expose the full glory of her naked body . . . The prettiest girl in all Norway? Perhaps, for I could not see her features clearly, but—there could be no possible shadow of doubt—she was certainly the fattest!

Unseen, I crawled away from the edge of the bluff and took cover in a heathery hollow. As I lit a consoling cigarette I heard, borne faintly by the evening breeze, a veritable fusilade of shots from that part of Gunnar's "field" which I had so recently forsaken.

Alas! I had exchanged the substance of grouse in abundance for the shadow of fabled trout. I had forfeited an evening of conviviality in the hunting-lodge for the ministrations and the company of the fattest, if not the prettiest girl in all Norway.

I came to a conclusion before I stubbed out my cigarette. It was that in sport, as in living, singleness of purpose is essential to success.

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### FOR SALE

AIR RIFLES, .22 rifles, shotguns, telescopic sights, new stocks can all be had on easiest of easy terms. Stamp for list.—R. W. Longstaff, Northgate, Darlington.

CLAY TARGETS, £5/5/0 per cylinder of 770 ex works, plus cylinder deposit of £2.—The Gun Club, Limited, Gun Club Works, Crayford, Kent.

CLAY SHOOTERS. We are the leading specialists. 12g Browning o/u 30in. full choke, ventilated rib, single trigger, special trapshooting H.P. stock, £114/14/10; 12g Browning 2-shot Lightweight model "U" type rib, £68; 12g Browning 2-shot standard model, "U" rib, £58/11/1; 12g Breda raised ventilated rib and quick choke, £69; 12g Remington M48 skeet gun, £80; shooting spectacles in case, £6/6/0 and £1/7/6; skeet vests £2/10/0. Consult us for your requirements. Game Shooters: Our own ejectors £70 to £120; Webley M700 12g, £69/8/4; Belgian M139 12g £42/12/0; 12g B.S.A. single £20/5/5; Greener single G.P. £19/10/6; Webley single 12g, £19/12/0. Second-hand guns: Lancaster 3in. ejector 2 pairs of barrels, £77/10/0; Davis 32in 3in. ejector, £40; Belgian non-ejector, £30; B.S.A. Diana Original air rifle stockists. Humber cartridges, £2/17/0 per 100; Kingston trap cartridges, £2.19.0 per 100. H.P. terms, repairs, exchanges.—J. Wheater (Gunmakers) Ltd., 265 Anlaby Road, Hull. Telephone 35698. Telegrams, "Targets, Hull."

COGSWELL & HARRISON 12-bore D.B. single trigger, recently completely overhauled, £40. Browning 12-bore Auto, as new, fully engraved, full choke, 2¾ chamber, £40 or nearest.—K. Rainback, 91 Shenley Avenue, Ruislip 3992, Middlesex.

EX-GOVT. SURPLUS CARTRIDGES: £8 per 400 box (minimum), carriage paid; satisfaction guaranteed; send S.A.E. for lists.—Hercules Armament Co. Ltd., 8 St. Martin's Street, London, W.C.2.

GUNS. Before you purchase that new gun, rifle or items of sporting equipment send for Blands new Catalogue and compare prices and values. Price 3/- post free.—T. Bland and Sons (Gunmakers) Ltd, 4/5 William IV Street, W.C.2.

GUNS. Webley and Scott single barrel semi-hammerless 12-bore guns, barrel 30 or 32 inch, 2¾ inch chamber, chequered stock and fore-end, £19/13/8. Hire purchase terms available.—T. Bland and Sons (Gunmakers) Ltd., 4/5 William IV Street, W.C.2.

JOSEPH LANG, best 12-bore D.B. hammer (with ejectors), No. 1 of pair; excellent condition, £25.—Box A.3263.

NEW SHOTGUNS. Cash, Exchanges, H.P. Terms. All 12-bore 2¾in case. French hammerless £35/2/4, deposit £11 or £6 over 18 monthly payments; Spanish hammerless, £35/18/8, deposit £11; with side clips and cross bolt £37, deposit £12; Belgian hammerless £40/8/6, deposit £10; Browning 5-shot Automatic, £48/4/10, deposit £15/10/0; with Polychoke, £68/13/3, deposit £17/15/0; Browning 5-shot Automatic, ventilated rib, £54/19/3, deposit £17/15/0; with Polychoke, £75/7/7, deposit £17/15/0; Browning under and over ejector, ventilated rib, double trigger, £108/4/2, deposit £36; single trigger £111/9/6, deposit £36; Webley double ejector £69/8/4, deposit £21; Arthur Turner double ejector £72, deposit £24; Webley single £19/3/10, deposit £6. We do our own H.P. terms. Lists Free.—Telephone 22560. Arthur Turner, Gunmaker, 33/35 West Bar, Sheffield 3.

POWELL 20-bore sidelock, No. 2 of pair; excellent condition, £45.—Box A.3262.

PURDEY muzzle loader, 16-bore D.B. percussion; beautiful old gun, £18.—Box A.3264.

SECONDHAND SHOTGUNS. Cash, Exchanges, H.P. Terms. All 12-bore. Pair 30in. Holland Royal sidelock ejectors, £220, or would split. Hellis 28in. sidelock ejector, £115, deposit £40; Browning 28in. ejector, 2¾in. case, £45, deposit £15; Bland 30in. ejector, 2¾in. case, £75, deposit £25; Savage 26in. 2¾in. case under and over non-ejector, £45, deposit £15. B.S.A. single, 2¾in., £14, deposit £4. Lists free. Our Wizard 12-bore cartridges, 56/11 100.—Arthur Turner, Gunmaker, 33/35 West Bar, Sheffield 3.

TELESCOPIC SIGHTS fitted to rifles from 25/- down, 5/8 weekly.—Longstaff, Northgate, Darlington, Registered Firearms Dealer.

16-BORE hammerless ejector, by Blanch, 28in. barrels, choke and improved cylinder; 5¼lb. case; excellent condition, £65. Wanted, good magnum 12bore.—Edgington, Pembroke College, Cambridge.

20-BORE d.b. hammerless, English made, guaranteed by Trulock & Harriss, Dublin.—F. M. Fitt & Company, Solicitors, Lower Mallow Street, Limerick.

### WANTED

ANCIENT & MODERN D.B. RIFLES wanted, also all types antique firearms; cash, or will trade against our stocks, which include Hardy fishing tackle.—W. Richards Ltd., Gunmakers since 1780, Liverpool.

DOUBLE BARREL RIFLES, hammerless, nitro-proof, Cal. .470 or similar, perfect condition at reasonable price.—Full details including weight, please write to W. Glaser, Lowenstrasse, 42, Zurich 1, Switzerland.

WANTED: Winchester lever action rifles, d.b. and s.b. rifles and shotguns, Colt revolvers, bowie knives, muzzle loading rifles and shotguns.—Sutcliffe, Ing Hey Farm, Briercliffe, Near Burnley, Lancashire. F.D.L. Lancashire 98.

### DOGS

BOOKING ENGLISH SPRINGER puppies, liver and white; lovely pedigree parents; good workers.—J. T. Rogers, Ball Rock, Lelant, St. Ives, Cornwall.

ENGLISH SPRINGER Spaniel puppies, excellent field trial strain both sides, born 11-9-'56; from 6 gns. —Walker, Birley Court, Dilwyn, Herefordshire. Telephone Ivington 238.

ENGLISH SETTER puppies, from three months, and from strain of proved workers; good-looking, perfectly reared; reasonable. — Lewis, Little Vale, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent. Telephone Woodchurch 374.

GERMAN SHORTHAIRED POINTER bitch yearling offered, sale or terms, good country home; extremely handsome, prizewinning strain field/bench; steady shot, house, car trained.—Box A.3267.

KEEN YOUNG LABRADOR, ideal Keeper's dog. Part trained, £15.—Dalglish, Heyshott, Midhurst.

LABRADOR pups by F.T.Ch. Greatford Teal; dam winner of three open stakes.—Box A.3266.

PEDIGREE YELLOW LABRADOR bitch 18 months; excellent worker, 20 gns.—E. L. Dolton, West Pinchbeck, Spalding. Pinchbeck Bars 329.

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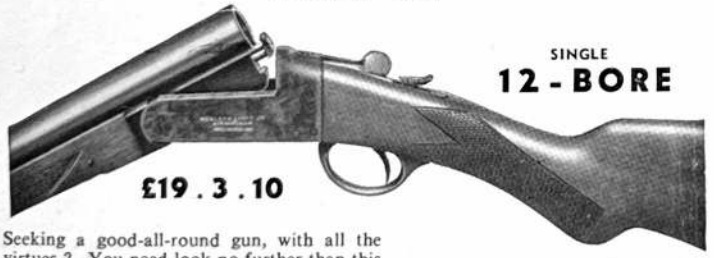

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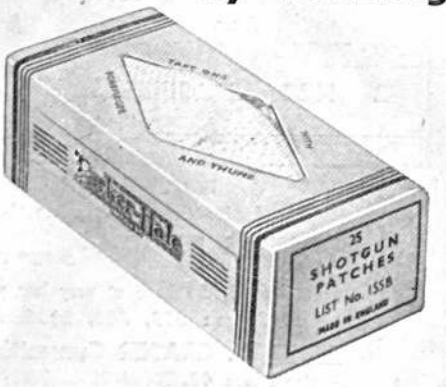


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